



2023 Football Memo – Week 8

October 11, 2023

Email = coordinator@sdhsaa.com

Author: Justin Ingalls

Cell = 605-201-9721

Thank You!!!

The football season is an extremely busy time for every one of you. It takes hard work to become a good official. We appreciate your investment in time and your time spent away from family. We would like to give you all a heartfelt thank you for the job you are doing as an official.

Thank You for Making A Difference

Officials—Challenge Yourself

Officials challenge themselves these last weeks of the SDHSAA football season. Try to honestly answer to yourself each of the questions below. Be the one to exceed expectations on and off the field these last weeks of the football season

- How do I want to remember this year?
- How do I want to be remembered this year?
- Have I done all the things that have allowed for maximum growth as a person, as an official?
- Have my actions proved I have been committed to my crew mates?
- What are the things I have done to make us a better crew?

Inadvertent Whistle

If an official blows his whistle while a player has possession of the live ball, the play is dead immediately. The team in possession may:

- Take the ball where it was blown dead, or
- Replay the down at the previous spot.

When the whistle is blown while the live ball is loose following a backward pass, fumble, illegal forward pass or illegal kick, the fumbling or passing team may:

- Take the ball where the player lost possession, or
- Replay the down at the previous spot

Whenever an inadvertent whistle sounds during a kick or a legal forward pass, there is no option; the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down is replayed.

If during a down, a live ball foul occurs on the play prior to the inadvertent whistle and the penalty is accepted, the penalty is administered, and the inadvertent whistle is ignored. The penalty shall be administered as determined by the basic spot and takes precedence over inadvertent whistle administration (4-2-3d).

- Inadvertent whistles can have a major impact on the outcome of the game—is every official's nightmare; we are all guilty of having one at some time or another.
- The best way to prevent inadvertent whistles is to know the rules, maintain focus and concentration, instill game awareness and employ preventative techniques.
- Whether the game is tied or a blowout, all officials must keep their heads in the game.
- It's important to have short memories, selective hearing and stay focused on the game.
- The moment you begin thinking about what a coach said to you, whether a call you made earlier in the game was correct or thinking about your trip home there's a greater chance for an inadvertent whistle.
- Never blow your whistle unless you absolutely see the ball, and only blow your whistle when the ball is in your coverage area.



2023 Football Memo – Week 8

- A couple of good habits to develop are waiting one second after seeing the ball and letting an incomplete pass bounce twice before sounding the whistle.
- Slow Whistle, Slow Whistle, Slow Whistle
- Remember—the play kills itself—your whistle only indicates the down is over—coaches need to coach players to understand this.
- If you blow an inadvertent whistle—stop play and own up to it.

**See Leather--See Leather--See Leather
Before Blowing the Whistle!**

Snapper: Contacted After Snap

When at the snap the offensive team is in a scrimmage kick formation, no defensive player may charge directly into the snapper. The protection exists until the snapper is able to protect himself, blocks or otherwise moves to participate in the play. “Protect Himself” means the snapper has time to look up and regain his balance. If contacted directly while his head is still down and before he has been given a chance to look up, the contact is likely to be a foul. Penalty: Personal foul (roughing the snapper), 15 yards, automatic first down. The foul occurs during a loose-ball play—the snap. Enforcement will be from the previous spot. A defensive player may line-up over the snapper. That defensive player may not make direct contact with the snapper until the snapper is able to protect himself. The defensive player may jump through the gap but cannot charge directly into the snapper. Umpires: before moving to your position in the offensive backfield, remind defensive players to stay off the snapper. The umpire is responsible for the initial action on the snapper. The protection exists whether or not there is a kick. The fact Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation is what counts, not whether the kick is actually made.

REMINDER: A scrimmage kick formation is defined as:

- No player is in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap, and, either:
- A player is in position with a knee on the ground 7 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage in position to be the holder and receive the long snap and with another player 3 yards or less behind that player in position to attempt a place kick, OR,
- A player is 10 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage and in position to receive a long snap.
- If neither exists, the formation is not “scrimmage kick” and the snapper is not afforded protections.

Weather—Second Half Choices

With the weather patterns moving across the state, which seems like each Friday, coaches can delay their choice for the second half instead of indicating choice at the end of the first half. Wind direction may change during halftime. Second half choices must be done before the three-minute warm-up period. Following the mandatory three-minute warm-up period after the halftime intermission expires, both teams assume their respective free-kick formations. The game officials are responsible for ensuring that there is a 3-minute warm-up period posted on the clock for use by the coaches immediately after the halftime intermission expires. The head coach is responsible for his team being on the field for mandatory warm-up time at the end of the scheduled halftime intermission.



2023 Football Memo – Week 8

Reflect on Your Performance

Invest some time to look at yourself to see if there are things you might change to make yourself more valuable to your crew.

Running Plays

- Do I anticipate the run and cover appropriately, or do I wait to see and then try to catch up with the run?
- Do I react to the key properly and cover appropriately?
- Do I stay wide when the play is coming to my area?
- Do I watch the periphery of the runner or do I watch the runner and miss the illegal action around him?
- If the play ends up opposite me on the far side, do I mop up and do preventative officiating or do I stay camped on my sideline (or back judge spot)?

Passing Plays

- Do I communicate with my crew—keys, responsibilities, and coverage?
- Do I read my pass keys promptly and anticipate the play or do I only react once the play has developed (and then I'm out of position)?
- Do I really know the rules thoroughly on offensive pass interference/defensive pass interference?
- Do I believe in the philosophy that both defense and offense have an equal right to the ball once it is in the air?
- As the back judge, do I let the receivers get behind me?
- As umpire, do I fail to regularly read the pass keys and move into position to cover effectively?

Sideline Plays

When the runner is downed inbounds near a sideline the clock should not be stopped unless there is another reason which would cause the clock to stop. The covering official must give the wind-the-clock signal to keep the clock running. Is it in or is it out? Clock operators need to know. Your officiating partners need to know. Coaches need to know. When the runner is airborne as he goes over the sideline, the spot is where you judge the ball crossed the sideline, not where the ball is when the runner first touches out of bounds. Wing officials—concentrate on forward progress spots and sideline clock signals. If a player is downed inbounds and immediately rolls out of bounds then you should have a wind.

Blocking In The Back

Blocks that start on the side and subsequently end up in the back are not fouls as long as contact is maintained throughout the block. It's important to distinguish between contact from the side, which is legal, and illegal blocks in the back, which carry a penalty. A block from the side, even though it results in a player being put on the ground, is not a foul unless for some other reason it is also a personal foul. If the defender spins on a blocker who is otherwise attempting a legal block, the block is legal. Sometimes the result of the spin is that contact by a blocker shifts to a point on the opponent's back.

If contact was first in front or on the side, the block is legal. It is imperative the official observe such a block in its entirety – *initial contact and follow-through*.

Continuous contact moving from in front of an opponent to behind is also legal.

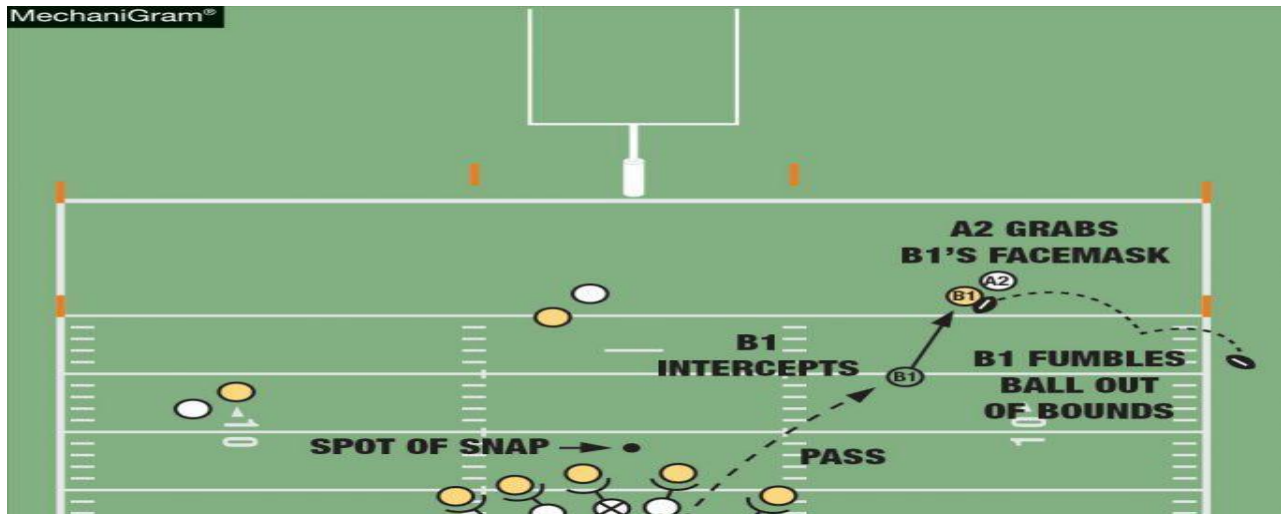


2023 Football Memo – Week 8

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER Take Your Eyes Off the Players

Take Pride in Being GREAT DEAD BALL OFFICIALS

Foul and Fumble? A Formula for Flaws



Change of possession. Foul in the end zone. Fumble forward and out of bounds. That's a lot of action on a single play. And it gives a crew a lot to consider. But by slowing down and thinking it through, the officials will come up with the correct solution. As seen in the MechaniGram, B1 intercepts A1's pass at his own six-yard line. B1 retreats into his own end zone, but before he can bring the ball across the goal line, his facemask is grabbed and twisted by A2. B1 fumbles and the ball rolls out of bounds at team B's three-yard line.

Momentum is not involved because the pass was intercepted outside team B's five-yard line and B1 ran into his end zone on his own volition. The fumble means the related run ended in team B's end zone. Since the team in possession was responsible for the force (NFHS) that put the ball into the end zone, the basic spot for enforcing the penalty is team B's goal line (NFHS 10-5-2). Once team B accepts the penalty, it will start a new series from its own 15-yard line.

Tips to Help Sideline Officials Look Sharp

When I was a deep official, I would catch flak from my linesman and line judge crewmates. They told me they do most of the work in a game and that I only pay attention when there is a pass or kick. It is true that wing officials are involved in the vast majority of plays as most of them start with a snap. Many rulings



2023 Football Memo – Week 8

must be made before and at the snap. Then there are judgments and knowing where to be once the ball is live. Wing officials need to be reminded of rulings and mechanics once a down is in progress. Here are suggestions and mechanical reminders for common live-ball situations. Give a timeout signal while running downfield to get to a dead-ball location. Do that instead of waiting to call timeout after getting to the line-to-gain spot or where the ball or runner went out of bounds. The reason is that time could be lost, especially in critical situations like near the end of either half.

Here is an illustrative scenario. On second and 10 at team B's 12-yard line, team A trails by four points. The clock shows 14 seconds to play in the fourth quarter. A1 catches a pass, runs and steps on the sideline at team B's four-yard line with two seconds on the clock. But the line judge did not signal the clock to stop until getting to the dead-ball spot. While the official was running, the clock ran down to zeroes, nobody corrected it and the referee declared the game over. Had the clock properly stopped, time would remain for team A to get an additional play to go for a touchdown to win the game.

Use good mechanics and signals at the goal line. Come in hard while running in the end zone when signaling touchdown near the goal line. That sells your call as you are displaying positive posture by rapidly moving in with your body in the end zone. Your position implies forward progress past the goal line.

No "me too" touchdown signal should be given just because you see the other wing go up with that signal. Only signal touchdown if you clearly see the ball breaking the goal line plane in player possession. When the ball is snapped inside team B's five-yard line, your first move should be to the goal line after the snap. Then you are in perfect position to rule on the ball penetrating the goal line in ball carrier control. It is advantageous to make rulings while standing still. Come back to get the spot if the play ends in the field of play. Your local mechanics may dictate a yard line other than the five for the use of that mechanic. When the ball is snapped inside team A's five-yard line, an initial move back to the goal line will help you rule safety or not should a team A player be judged down in or near his own end zone.

Practice good dead-ball mechanics. Your duties are not over when a kick try, or field goal is airborne near the goalposts. Come hard into the field to help monitor dead-ball action until teams separate and head toward their sidelines.

We want wing officials to signal if a pass is forward or backward. That will help you and your wing partner determine a live or dead ball if it hits the ground.

An important ruling is if the passer is behind or beyond the line when the ball is released. If either of the passer's feet (NFHS) are past the line, throw a flag and note the foul spot for penalty enforcement purposes.

Your local mechanics may call for specific movements should a snap go over the punter's head. One wing may stay at the line while the other moves into the offensive backfield to help the referee cover the play. For example, remain at the line if the referee's back is to you or go back if you're facing the referee. For crews of four or five, you must know which wing official should be under the goalpost for a kick try or field-goal attempt. That is based on the referee's location relative to the kicker and holder.

Now that NFHS also has a 40-second play clock, you must know when to give the 40-second clock signal at the end of certain plays. In crews of four or less, a wing may be required to keep the 40-second count if there is no visible play clock. The pregame meeting is vital so the above mechanics and variances can be covered, and all crew members are clear on their duties and positioning.