



2021 Football Memo – Week 9

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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 – Make a Difference

Video Review

The SDHSAA has found that the most effective training tool for promoting consistency and improved officiating is through video review.

With the help of SDHSAA coaches and Mark Smith of Pierre, the SDHSAA is working on compiling a video review of unique plays and situations.

The SDHSAA is hoping the plays will allow discussion areas of mechanics, crew communication, and rules study with football officials on high school mechanics and rules.

The plays are not meant to pick on any one official, crew or team. These plays are meant to be a learning tool to help promote what we all want to see from our officials.

Take ideas from these plays that you find helpful and apply them to your football officiating game. This week's video plays:

UPDATED LINK TO TRAINING VIDEOS: <https://www.sdhsaa.com/football-training-videos/>

Onside and Pop-up Kick Situations

Allow me to re-iterate the following:

- When an onside kick is imminent, move into position that gives us the best opportunity to cover the kick – Bottom line is we need to be on high alert.
 - B and L on kickers line – watch for offside (breaking the plane – dead ball foul) and the manner in which the ball is kicked off of the tee. We must know if it is kicked directly into the ground or from the tee directly into the air. We must see this action and be ready to rule immediately if a grounded kick goes into the air. I want us to use **at least waist high** as the guideline for **into the air**. This is a player safety situation. Kickers must be coached that if the ball is kicked directly into the ground it must bounce or touch the ground more than one time before it pops into the air to not be considered a pop-up kick. Imagine rolling, dribbling, spinning on the ground, not kicked into and immediately bounces up.
 - U and H on the receivers restraining line. Watch for touches, blocks before legally allowed low blocks (illegal) and help with how the ball is kicked.
 - R – positioned deep – you have the entire goal line should the ball be kicked deep – You also have the responsibility of 4 (3 in the 9-man game) on each side of the kicker when the ball is kicked



2021 Football Memo – Week 9

- **Rule 6-1-11** – Review as a crew. Pop up kicks are illegal – It is a dead ball foul if a free kick is immediately driven into the ground, strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of the ball being kicked directly off of the tee (pop-up kick) (2-24-10, 6-1-11). If the ball is kicked directly off of the tee and into the air (not grounded) the ball remains alive and the receiving team must be given an unobstructed opportunity to catch the untouched free kick. A fair catch signal can also be used by R and the kick/ball/play is dead immediately when possessed (not simply touched).
- **Rule 2-24-10 (NFHS Football Rules Book 2021)**
 - A pop-up kick is a free kick in which the kicker drives the ball immediately into the ground, the ball strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of a ball kicked directly off the tee
- **Rule 6-11-1 (NFHS Football Rules Book 2021)**
 - A pop-up kick is illegal
- **Penalty**
 - The ball is immediately dead when a pop-up kick is made. Team K is penalized five yards and will re-kick

Great Mechanics

Good mechanics make the difference between a football game that is well officiated and one that is not. It is one thing to know the rules, but another to know where to position yourself on the field, what to look at and then, how to interpret what you observe.

Movement and compromise are the characteristics of football officiating. Twenty-two or eighteen players moving around, competing for space and position; the officials must utilize hustle, angles, distance and planned compromises to observe and control the action.

This newsletter will deal with mechanics based on the National Federation Officials Manual.

Prior To Starting the Game

All officials shall observe players in their pregame warm-ups. If an official observes any equipment violations, including but not limited to an exposed knee, he shall verbally notify the Head Coach, and the player(s) shall not be allowed to participate in the subsequent game until correction has been made. Officials are encouraged to use preventive officiating techniques and good communication skills to avoid unnecessary penalties throughout the game.

Insights and Notes from our Observers

Thank you observers – nearly 90% of our crews have been observed at least one time – we will keep the observation program going through the post season games

- Count players on every down, no “me too” signals – recount anytime you have to
- Make an incomplete pass bounce twice before you blow the whistle, patience
- Keep your head up after the play has ended, be aware of what happens around you, great dead ball officiating is a must
- Officiate your keys every down, be knowledgeable of down and distance



2021 Football Memo – Week 9

- Communicate and make every effort to get it right on the field
- See Leather—See Leather—See Leather, before blowing the whistle
- Slow Whistle, Slow Flag, Slow Bean Bag
- Wings—run between hash marks—let the ball carrier take you up the field
- When play goes out of bounds on your side of the field—turn all the way to face out of bounds area to view player action—your primary responsibility is the out of bounds spot and safety of players who have went out of bounds. Once those two responsibilities have been satisfied then – and only then – do we worry about getting a football back onto the field
- Don't ever toss a ball to a wing official to place the ball for a measurement. The ball should be taken/run over to the wing official and so they can place it at their feet for the measurement.
- See the whole play when calling an infraction. Make the fouls be solid before making a call
- Signal professionally – incomplete or “no good” sign should be given at chest level.
- Tuck your flags in. Do not give the impression of looking for trouble.
- Continue to officiate after throwing the flag.
- Square up when marking forward progress
- Linesmen, don't look back over your shoulder to see if the player achieved the line-to-gain. The line judge should stop the clock if he feels player has reached the line-to-gain. Know the line to gain yard line
- When an offensive player's forward progress has stopped and the defense starts driving the player backwards, get on the whistle, and get the play stopped
- Use bean bag on fumbles – beanbag fumbles, not a backward pass – a snap is a backward pass
- Wings—inside five yard going in or going out first move is to the goal line
- Wings—Don't ever give up the goal line. If you are responsible for the goal line—hold your position. You may have to back off for safety or perspective but never give it up if there is the possibility of it coming into play

Motion

Double wing formation: If both backs go in motion at the same time and have not made any movement that simulates the beginning of a play the play would continue because both backs could stop --reset--and remain motionless for one second before the snap which makes the play legal.

If both backs are still in motion or if one back stops and the other stays in motion you would have an illegal shift foul at the snap which is a live ball foul that carries a five-yard penalty from the previous spot. The defensive team could accept the five-yard penalty from the previous spot and replay the down or decline the penalty and take the result of the play.

The philosophy is some acts can be corrected before the snap and are not a foul until the ball is snapped.

Officials Preparation

Preparation and concentration are most important for great high school football officiating. The SDHSAA asks and expects those two things each game from each and every official. Preparation begins prior to game day and escalates when you arrive at the game site. Pre-game preparations are important.

Each official must be adept at reading his keys on each and every play. Breakdowns in this area cannot be tolerated as a breakdown in one position leads to a breakdown for the entire crew.



2021 Football Memo – Week 9

Before the ball is snapped each official has specific duties that must be performed. Failure to do so may provide an unfair advantage for one team or inhibit the crew's ability to cover a play correctly. Basic positions may vary depending upon play situations, team formations, the field and weather conditions.

Awarded First Down

Fouls by Team B that give Team A an automatic first down are roughing the kicker or holder, roughing the passer, and roughing the snapper.

Loss of Down

Fouls by Team A that include loss of right to replay a down are illegally handing the ball forward; illegal forward pass; and illegal touching of forward pass by an ineligible receiver

Offensive pass interference and defensive pass interference are not automatic first downs

Officials Quiz 2021

Question 1: On third and seven, A17 rolls out and is two yards behind the neutral zone when he throws a backward pass to A41 who muffs the ball. While the ball is in the air an official sounds his whistle. What are Team A's options?

Question 2: Fourth and 10 at Team K's 40-yard line. K23's punt hits K88 in the leg on Team R's 35-yard line. R48 dives for the ball but muffs it. Anticipating a recovery, the back judge inadvertently blows his whistle when the ball is on Team R's 30-yard line. What is the ruling?

Question 3: On a third down play, A43 fumbles short of the line-to-gain. The ball crosses the line-to-gain before going out of bounds, last touched by B41. Does Team A have a first down?

Question 4: Fourth and three at Team R's 20-yard line. As Team K kicks a successful field goal, R72 slaps K66 in the head at the line of scrimmage. What options for enforcement does Team K have?

Question 5: First and 10 from Team A's 30-yard line. A12 throws a backward pass to halfback A33. The ball bounces off A12's helmet, hits the ground at Team A's 32-yard line and rolls to a stop. Since the ball hit the ground beyond the line of scrimmage is that an incomplete forward pass?

Question 6: The game clock is stopped because A45 is bleeding. Team A is then granted a charged timeout. A45 receives medical treatment and the wound is properly covered. Does A45 have to leave game?

Question 7: First and 10 for Team A at its own 20-yard line. A65 is flagged for blocking below the waist at Team A's 16-yard line. Runner A23 is downed at Team A's 10-yard line. The Team B accepts the penalty. Where is the penalty enforced?



2021 Football Memo – Week 9

Question 8: Receiver R24 muffs Team K’s punt and it rolls back into Team R’s end zone. R27 recovers the ball while in the end zone and carries the ball out across the goal line. Is the advance by R27 legal?

Question 9: Team A breaks its huddle, and all players stand in their positions. When the quarterback says, “Set,” all players go into a three-point stance except guard A66. Back A47 starts in motion, after which A66 goes into his three-point stance. The ball is snapped two seconds later. Is this a legal shift?

Question 10: R33 muffs a free kick at Team R’s 20-yard line. K32 catches the muff at Team R’s 18-yard line advances to Team B’s four-yard line, where he is downed. Is the advance by K32 legal?

Quiz Answers

Ruling 1: Team A has the option of replaying the down at the previous spot (third and seven) or keeping the ball where A17 passed it, making it fourth and nine.

Ruling 2: Team R could elect to replay the down or take the ball at the spot of first touching.

Ruling 3: Following the forward fumble out of bounds, the succeeding spot is the out-of-bounds spot which gives Team A a first down. The clock starts on the snap.

Ruling 4: Team K has the option of accepting the three points and having the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or canceling the score and retaining the ball after the penalty is enforced from the previous spot. The clock would start on the snap if a new series is awarded to Team K, but if a free kick follows, it will start when the ball is legally touched.

Ruling 5: That is a backward pass that turned into a muff. The ball remains live. The initial direction of A12’s pass was backward; the ball retains that status until it is either caught or recovered. Either Team A or Team B could recover and advance the ball.

Ruling 6: A45 must leave the game for at least one down (unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs). A45 cannot “buy” re-enter via a charged timeout.

Ruling 7: The penalty is enforced from Team A’s 10-yard line. Because the foul occurred beyond the end of the run, the penalty is enforced from the basic spot, which is the end of the run.

Ruling 8: NO! Play results in a touchback. The kick is dead the instant the ball breaks the plane of the goal line and results in a touchback. It does not matter if the ball was touched or which team touched it. The muffing is NOT considered a new force, instead the kick is considered the force if the ball goes from the field of play across a goal line.

Ruling 9: This is an illegal shift. All 11/9 players of Team A did not come to an absolute stop and remain stationary simultaneously for at least one second after the shift. It’s a live ball foul at the snap because A47 could have stopped, reset and restarted his motion. If accepted, the five-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot and the down is repeated.

Ruling 10: If Team K catches or recovers a muffed kick, the ball is dead immediately. It cannot be advanced. It will be Team K’s ball, first and ten at the 18-yard line.

**We Wish Each of You
A Great End to the 2021 Season**