

# South Dakota High School Activities Association

# 2017 Football Newsletter No. 1

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Author: Buck Timmins

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## Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is always a priority passed down from the SDHSAA. Teams most often take on the characteristics of their coaches. When a coach is one who believes in the virtues of fundamentals, the players can usually be counted on to play crisp football as designed by the NFHS rules book. Conversely, a coach who berates officials, uses profanity and constantly points out the supposed mistakes of officials will often have teams that follow suit.

Most officials will answer a coach's question if it is asked in a reasonable tone of voice. No one expects coaches to appreciate every call but constant comments such as "you blew that one" or "how can you make a call like that" deserve to be answered with silence and possibly a penalty flag if the comments escalate to continuing badgering. Continual complaining can serve as a distraction to officials.

If the comments turn personal then no leeway should be given to the coach who is complaining. There is a large difference between disagreeing with a call and having your integrity questioned. Once a head coach has crossed the line, the necessary penalty should be enforced swiftly. That is the exact purpose of a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. If the coach is not penalized, his conduct may become more offensive.

Coaches who let the officials officiate serve the game much better than one who constantly questions every call and berates the officials. The head coach can help officials by keeping players in the team box and by moderating the behavior of assistant coaches. The head coach should be the only one communicating with the officials.

## Let Officials Officiate

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## 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:

<https://youtu.be/N--K6fJ8WNc>

## Unsportsmanlike Fouls

Officials, if you have an unsportsmanlike foul on a player, note the player's number, and inform the head coach that a second unsportsmanlike foul will cause this player to be disqualified from the contest. Coaches need to take the appropriate steps to let this player know what happens if a second unsportsmanlike foul should occur.

The same is not true for a player guilty of two personal fouls. Officials need to understand the difference between a personal foul and an unsportsmanlike foul. If officials deem the personal foul action to be flagrant—the player is automatically disqualified from game.

Unsportsmanlike acts are those that do not involve physical contact against an opponent. Taunting, excessive celebrating and disrespect directed at officials are examples of unsportsmanlike acts. Late hits, flagrant facemask grab, unnecessary roughness, excessive or targeting fouls are among those considered personal fouls.

**PLAY:** A1 catches a pass and has a clear path to the end zone. At the team B five yard line and before he scores, A1 points at and taunts pursuing B2. The line judge throws his flag for taunting and reports A1's foul as (a) unsportsmanlike conduct, or (b) a personal foul. What is the ruling?

**RULING:** In (a), that is a live-ball foul penalized as a dead-ball foul. Team A keeps the score and the penalty is enforced on the try. In (b), the personal foul is a live-ball foul during a run. The penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul (team B's five yard line). It would be Team A's ball, first and 10 from team B's 20-yard line and the score would NOT count. A big difference based on how that infraction is reported. Unsportsmanlike conduct is the correct call on the play. Officials need to know what are personal fouls and unsportsmanlike fouls. Report the foul correctly to the referee to ensure proper enforcement.

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## Illegal Participation/Eligibility: After Going Out of Bounds

If a player is blocked or pushed out of bounds, he may legally participate during the down as long as he immediately reenters the field. Other than that exemption: No player of Team A or Team K may go out of bounds (intentionally or unintentionally) during the down and return.

The foul occurs when an offending player returns inbounds, not when he steps out of bounds. That restriction does not apply to players of Team B or Team R who inadvertently (unintentionally) step out of bounds.

No player can go out of bounds intentionally and return during any down. Penalty: Illegal participation, 15 yards. (Rule 9-6).

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## Rugby Style Kick/Quick-Kick Punt

A kicker is any player who legally punts, drop kicks or place kicks. A player becomes a kicker when his knee, lower leg or foot makes contact with the ball. He is still considered to be the kicker until he has had reasonable opportunity to regain his balance.

Team K does not have to be in scrimmage kick formation to kick the ball.

Player A2 gets off a quick kick. Is A2 entitled to the same protection as a conventional punter? 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 (NFHS 9-4-5). 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 (NFHS 9.4.5a).

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 avoid ability 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 sole reason for the contact, there is no foul.

Roughing the kicker includes any act that endangers the safety of the kicker or holder. The penalty for roughing is 15 yards from the previous spot and an automatic first down. Running into the kicker or holder is a foul that occurs when the kicker is displaced from his kicking position but is not roughed. The penalty is five yards from the previous spot with the down repeated.

The punter in a ruby style kick play or quick-kick punt play NEVER forfeits his protection from personal fouls.

**Case Book 9.4.5 SITUATION B:** K in scrimmage kick formation, muffs the snap, but quickly recovers and begins to run. However K1 changes his mind and: (a) punts on the run; or (b) abruptly stops and punts. R1 is unable to stop his charge and forcibly contacts K1. R1 did not touch the kick.

**RULING:** No foul in either (a) or (b) because it was not reasonably certain K1 was going to punt the ball.

**COMMENT:** 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 reasonable certain a kick will be made. The primary criteria is whether or not the contact is unavoidable.

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### Helmet Comes Off During Play

If a player's helmet comes off while the ball is live and is not directly attributable to a foul by an opponent, the player must be replaced for at least one down, unless halftime or overtime intermission occurs (3-5-10d). When this occurs, an official's time-out shall be called. A charged timeout does not excuse the player from sitting out one play. The same rule applies to an injured player.

When the player whose helmet comes completely off is in possession of the ball, the ball becomes dead immediately per rule 4-2-2k (official sounds whistle immediately to kill play). But if it is another player, the ball remains live. It is a personal foul if a player or non-player initiates contact with an opposing player whose helmet has come completely off.

If a player whose helmet comes completely off during a down continues to participate beyond the immediate action in which the player is engaged, it is a foul for illegal participation. A helmet-less player shall not block, tackle or otherwise participate beyond the immediate action in which the player is engaged when the helmet came completely off.

Coaches, remind your players between downs to always check to make sure their chin straps are completely snapped. Teammates can assist with this process. Officials, you can assist with reminders as well.

**PLAY:** B54's helmet comes completely off while trying to legally tackle runner A32, who does not immediately go down after the contact. Without ever losing contact, A32 drags B54 for a few yards before finally going down to the ground.

**RULING:** Legal play by B54 because he is still engaged in the "immediate action" of attempting to tackle A32. After the play is over, B54 must leave the field for at least one play. (3-5-10d; 9-6-4g)

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## Kickoff Formation

The timing of the foul in Rules 6-1-3 and 6-1-4 for not having at least four players (3 in nine man football) on both sides of the kicker has been changed to the time of the kick. The change allows lateral movement by the kicking team within the five yard belt but requires game officials to ascertain whether or not the formation is legal when the ball is kicked (dead ball foul).

1. At least four (3 in nine man football) players on either side of the kicker. If a member of the free kick team is holding the ball for the kicker he is included in the count on the side of the ball he is located on in the 11 or 9 player game.
2. All players on the kicking team except the kicker must be no more than five yards behind the free kick line after the ball has been marked ready-for-play in the 11 man or 9 man player game. A player satisfies this rule when no foot is on or beyond the line 5 yards behind Team K's free kick line.
3. If one player is lined up more than 5 yards behind the restraining line, he/she is the only player who may kick the football in both the 11 or 9 player game. If any other player kicks the ball, it is a foul. This a dead ball foul for encroachment.
4. If no player on a free kick is more than 5 yards behind the free kick line, any player is eligible to kick the ball as long as the kicking team has at least 4 other players on either side of the player who kicks the ball, (3 in 9 player football).

This is intended to limit the running start kicking teams have during the play and thus reduce the potential for injury.

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## Restricted Area—Rule 1-2-3g, 9-8-3

**COACHES & OFFICIALS:** The restricted area (formerly the coaches box) has been defined where a maximum of three coaches may communicate with players and substitutes during dead ball situations. The (up to three) coach(es) must move behind the restricted area before the ball becomes live. Coaches you need to name a “get-back-coach,” so you as coaches in the restricted area have ample room to move into this area before the ball becomes live.

This National Federation rule was adopted for safety purposes for all parties involved.

If a game official unintentionally contacts a coach or other nonplayer in the restricted area while the ball is live, the team is assessed a 15-yard penalty for a nonplayer, illegal personal contact foul. As a nonplayer foul, the penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot. A second such offense would result in the head coach's disqualification. Unlike a foul for sideline interference (non-contact, Rule 9-8-1k or 9-8-3), no warning or 5-yard penalty is required in this situation.

Officials, it is your responsibility to enforce the rule fairly (both teams) when a violation of the rule takes place. The SDHSAA understands you have a responsibility with players on the field, but when the rule is violated we expect you to address the situation when it presents itself.

Penalty enforcement applies to each individual team pertaining to any violation(s) enforced.

- First offense, flag, team sideline warning, no yardage penalty assessed
    - Sideline warning—don't wait until the fourth quarter—if coaches are there now, it is because you as an official have let them be there the entire game
  - Second offense, a five-yard penalty for sideline interference
  - Third offense, 15 yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct charged to the offending head coach.
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## 35-Point Rule/50-Point Rule

When a team secures a 35 point lead in the second half, the clock will continue to run. Regulation timing is followed in the first half regardless of the score.

Beginning with the ensuing kick-off the following changes, and only these will be made regarding rules determining when the clock will and will not be stopped. The clock will run continuously except for the following situations when it will be stopped:

- Any time-out charged to a team (re-start with the ensuing snap)
- After a score (re-start clock with the ensuing kick-off when legally touched by R, or by the ensuing snap—kick out-of-bounds or touchback)
- Intermission between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (re-start with snap)
- Extended injury time-out—only if coach is brought out (re-start with ready for play)
- Any time officials deem it necessary for safety reasons (re-start with ready for play)

Once the mercy rule is in effect, the clock will continue to run until the completion of the game. Regulation timing will not resume if the score differential drops below 35. If a team is 50 points or more ahead at the end of the first half or if it secures such a lead during the second half, the game is ended immediately.

The 35-Point Rule/50 –Point Rule only applies to Class 11A, Class 11B and 9-man games.

**The game clock will continue to run after a change of team possession.**

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## Defenseless Player

Rule 2-32-16 has been expanded to provide specific examples of a defenseless player. One example is "A player on the ground including a runner who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet-first." The player becomes defenseless when he starts his slide.

The forward progress spot is NOT when the player starts his slide but the dead ball spot is where the runner touches the ground with anything other than his feet, hands, or ball. This will be consistent with other situations of ball becoming dead during the game.

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## 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 R's 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 R's goal, unless R chooses a spot of first touching by K.

**PLAY:** K1's free kick or scrimmage kick is muffed at team R's 10 yard line by kick receiver R1 and football rolls into the R's end zone.

**RULING:** The force of kick is what put the ball into the end zone. The ball becomes dead immediately when it broke the plane of R's goal line and results in a touchback

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## Blocking Below The Waist

Coaches and observers have several concerns related to blocking, including low blocks by the defense on lead blockers.

Rules and restrictions concerning blocking below the waist are clear and do not specify that the prohibitions are solely on the offense. These safety-driven rules mandate consistent enforcement by officials. Properly positioned officials, watching the play from a wider perspective than simply following the football, and properly instructed players

**taught the right techniques by their respective coaches, will ensure that knee and other injuries are minimized, and that the balance between offense and defense is maintained.**

Blocking below the waist is now restricted to players who are on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone at the snap. **It is no longer legal for a back to block below the waist.** Blocking below the waist is making initial contact below the waist from the front or side against an opponent other than a runner. Blocking below the waist applies only when the opponent has one or both feet on the ground.

If a Team A blocker's initial contact is with an opponent's hand(s), that are at or above the waist, and the blocker follows through and blocks that opponent below the waist, the block is considered above the waist. If the blocker first contacts the opposing player's hand(s) below the waist and the blocker follows through with a block below the waist the initial intent of the block in this case was to block below the waist and will be considered an illegal block. Officials make sure you see the entire block, in order to rule if it is a legal or illegal block.

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### **Free Blocking Zone**

The free-blocking zone disintegrates and the exception for a player to block below the waist (offense or defense) and/or block in the back are not to continue AFTER the ball has left the zone.

Offensive or defensive players who are NOT on the line of scrimmage and in the free blocking zone at the snap are prohibited from blocking below the waist. A defensive player is on his line of scrimmage when he is within one yard of his scrimmage line at the snap. The defensive player does not have to be in a three-point stance to be considered on the line of scrimmage.

When Team A is in the shotgun/pistol or scrimmage kick formation, blocking below the waist is legal if the block is **initiated immediately at the snap** (offensive lineman can't stand-up then go back down and block below the waist) while the ball is passing through the zone. If there is any delay, it is an illegal block.

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### **Officials Quiz 2017**

**Question 1:** Substitutes A12 and B12 properly enter the game between downs. The replaced player of Team A remains in the team huddle while the replaced Team B player leaves the field within three seconds. Is this a legal substitution?

**Question 2:** Fourth and nine from team R's 38 yard line. Punter K1 tries for a "coffin-corner" kick. With no team R player in position to make a play, K7 catches K1's punt at team R's three yard line. K7's momentum carries him into team R's end zone. Is that a touchback, or does the momentum exception apply?

**Question 3:** After the ball is declared ready for play, backs A25 and A34 simultaneously go in motion and stop. Before one second elapses, back A46 goes in motion parallel to his end line. The ball is snapped while A46 continues in motion. What is the ruling?

**Question 4:** Before the snap and with the game clock running, B79 jumps into the neutral zone and gets back without making contact. His action causes lineman A65 (lined up directly across from B79) to lift his hand from the ground, and he falls forward into the neutral zone without making contact. Do you have a false start on A65? When does the clock start?

**Question 5:** The holder places his knee down on the 10-yard line for the PAT attempt following a touchdown. As he receives the snap, he keeps his knee on the ground as the ball is placed on the tee. Just before the kicker reaches the ball, the holder flips the ball forward to an eligible receiver who catches the ball and advances for a score. What is the ruling?

**Question 6:** On fourth down from his own 22 yard line, punter K43 muffs the snap and, at his own six yard line, kicks the rolling ball through the end zone. What is the ruling?

**Question 7:** With five seconds remaining in the first half, A8 completes a pass to A82. Time expires during the down and B32 piles on after the play. When is the penalty enforced?

**Question 8:** After the ready for play is given and prior to the ball being kicked off from K's 40 yard line, Team K has five players to the left of the kicker and has five players to the right of the kicker. Prior to the ball being kicked by K1, player K2 is straddling the K 35-yard line with one foot on each side of the line. What is the ruling?

**Question 9:** Team A has the ball 4<sup>th</sup> and 10 from B's 43-yard line. Team A is attempting a field goal from the 50-yard line. A2 kicks the ball and it comes up well short of the goal line, rolling out of bounds at the B's 5 yard line. Where will Team B next put the ball into play?

**Question 10:** Team A is in shotgun formation. At the snap, left tackle A77 sets up to pass block, taking two steps back to block the edge rush end, B50. As B50 tries to rush outside of the blocker, A 77 drops and blocks B50 just below the knees, taking both players to the ground. What is the ruling?

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## Football Officials Or Coaches Concerns

- If you have any play situations during your games that officials statewide should know about to help them become better officials, please send plays to be included in weekly bulletins.
- If you have questions about rule interpretation, please forward your concerns to [buck.timmins@k12.sd.us](mailto:buck.timmins@k12.sd.us) or call me at 605-996-1483 (home) or 605-933-1493 (cell).
- If you have any questions or comments about any information you will receive this football season--please forward your concern to me.

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## Quiz Answers

**Ruling 1:** In this situation, Team A is charged with a 5-yard penalty (dead ball) for an illegal substitution because the replaced player of Team A did not leave within three seconds as required.

**Ruling 2:** The ball is dead when a team K player catches a scrimmage kick. The momentum exception does not apply. It exists to prevent team R from inadvertently scoring a safety for team K and only applies when a team R player possesses the ball inside his five yard line. Since no member of team R was in position to make a catch, there is no foul for kick-catching interference. The ball belongs to team R, first and 10 at its three yard line.

**Ruling 3:** Illegal shift. The one second requirement has not been satisfied.

**Ruling 4:** This is a dead-ball encroachment foul against the defense. The foul was the only reason for stopping the clock, so it will start on the ready-for-play signal. The offended team has option to start the clock on snap for an accepted penalty inside the last two minutes of either half.

**Ruling 5:** The ball is dead as soon as the holder executed the forward pass while on his knee. The same play would have been legal if the holder had risen off his knee when in possessing, and then passing the ball.

**Ruling 6:** The foul occurs on a loose ball play and the basic spot is the previous spot. This is by the team in possession behind the basic spot. Thus, the penalty is enforced from the

spot of the foul. If Team R accepts the penalty, Team K will replay fourth down after enforcement from the six to the three yard line. Team R may decline the penalty and take the result of the play, a safety.

**Ruling 7:** The 15 yard penalty is enforced on the second half kickoff.

**Ruling 8:** Encroachment on K2 as he did not have both feet with 5 yards of K's restraining line. This is a dead ball foul (do not allow the ball to be kicked). The penalty is 5-yards and K will now kick from the 35 yard line.

**Ruling 9:** Five yard line. Treat the field goal attempt the same as a punt out of bounds.

**Ruling 10:** Foul for illegal block below the waist. While the contact took place with the zone, the ball had long left the zone (shotgun snap).

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**Be Outstanding Protecting Players**