

South Dakota High School Activities Association

2017 Football Newsletter No. 6

September 27, 2017

Author: Buck Timmins

Wind and the Football

Pass Direction

Whether a pass is forward or backward is determined by the initial direction the ball is thrown (2-31-2).

- Quarterback throws forward pass into a stiff wind, but wind blows back the ball, where it hits the ground—incomplete forward pass.

Free Kick

When a free kick penetrates R's free kick line in flight, it is considered to have gone the required 10 yards. If strong wind blows ball back past 50 yard line the ball is still considered to have gone 10 yards.

- Case Book 6-1-7 Situation B

Scrimmage Kicks

If a Team K's punt is high and a strong wind blows it back in or behind the neutral zone—the ball is deemed to not have crossed the neutral zone. Team K may catch or recover the scrimmage kick in or behind the neutral zone and advance.

If the punt touches beyond the neutral zone and rebounds behind the neutral zone untouched by Team R or Team K the ball is deemed not to have been beyond the neutral zone.

Field Goals/Extra Point Kicks

For a scoring kick to be successful, the entire ball must pass completely over the cross bar and completely between the inside edges of the uprights. Once that has been accomplished, the kick is successful even if it is blown back into the end zone.

- Case Book 8.4.1 Situation A

Football Mechanics Test

The 2017 Mechanic Exam is available for crews to complete. This exam must be completed and submitted online. The online Mechanics Exam due date is Tuesday, October 3, 2017 by Noon (CT). You can download and print a hard copy of the test to go over with your crew. The exam can be completed by logging into the SDHSAA website under the "Officials Zone" and then "Online Exams" just as you did with the open book rules exam. Only one member of your playoff crew needs to submit the exam online.

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://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKX8dLauqLM&feature=youtu.be>

Officiating the Backward Pass

On passing plays, the Referee observes blocking by the backs as the quarterback drops back. The Referee should move to maintain the 12- to 14- yard distance between himself and the quarterback (e.g. if the quarterback drops back seven yards, the Referee retreats seven yards at a 45 degree angle from the quarterback maintaining spacing between himself and the quarterback.

The wider view allows the Referee to determine if the pass is forward or backward yet to continue to focus attention on the passer. The Referee will use an extended arm towards the offensive team's backfield to indicate a backward pass.

Wing officials when you read pass, do not be too quick to release downfield—be patient. Read your keys. Be prepared to determine whether a quick pass thrown toward you is forward or backward and to assist the umpire if he needs help in ruling whether or not a quick pass crosses the line of scrimmage. When in question, it is a forward pass. If you determine the quick pass is a backward pass you need to punch your arm toward the offensive backfield to alert the other officials the pass is backwards.

As a crew during your pre-game discussions, talk about how the crew is going to rule whether a pass is forward or backwards. Only rule an incomplete pass if the pass is thrown in your area of coverage and the ball has bounced at least two times on the field.

Towels

According to Rule 1-5-3(5)a, teams are no longer restricted to wearing white towels. The rule will now note that towels may be one solid color other than ball or penalty flag-colored. Not every player must wear a towel, but when towels are worn, players of the same team must wear towels of the same color. If the towel has a manufacturers logo or trademark, it may not exceed 2 ¼ square inches in any dimension. Towels may be no less than 4 inches wide and 12 inches long, or larger than 18 inches wide and 36 inches long, and must be made of moisture-absorbing material.

Numbering Exception

On first, second, or third down, when Team A sets or shifts into a scrimmage-kick formation, the snapper may be a player numbered 1 to 49 or 80 to 99. If Team A has the snapper in the game under this exception, Team A shall have at least four players wearing numbers 50-79 on its line of scrimmage.

The snapper in the game under this exception must be between the ends and is an ineligible forward pass receiver during that down unless the pass is touched by Team B (7-5-6b).

On fourth down or during a kick try, when Team A sets or shifts into a scrimmage-kick formation, any Team A player numbered 1 to 49 or 80 to 99 may take the position of any Team A player numbered 50 to 79. A player in the game under this exception must assume an initial position on the line of scrimmage between the ends and he remains an ineligible forward-pass receiver during that down unless the pass is touched by Team B.

If a place kick is used for a try, it is a scrimmage kick and the numbering exception may be used.

Simultaneous Catch

A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch or recovery in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing team players inbounds (2-4-3). A catch is gaining custody of the ball in flight. The ball is usually loose from a pass, kick or fumble. A recovery occurs when a participant firmly grasps the ball after it contacts the ground. That could be after a fumble, muff or kick.

Simultaneous catch rules are the same for forward and backward passes. If either pass type is caught at the same time by opposite team players, the ball is declared dead and is awarded to the team that threw the pass. The rules for a simultaneous catch also apply to joint recovery of a fumble. When that happens, the team that fumbled retains possession.

In order for there to be a simultaneous catch, opposing players must have simultaneous joint possession, and both must be in contact with the ground inbounds. The players' contact with the ground does not have to be exactly simultaneous.

Knee Pads

The lone restrictions on knee pads are that they are to be worn over the knee, under the pants and shall be at least ½ inch thick or 3/8 inch thick if made of shock absorbing material. There is no specification on the size of the pads width/length, the thickness is all that is mandated other than the knee be covered.

The 2016 NFHS Points of Emphasis require that that the pants must completely cover the knees, thigh guards and knee pads and any portion of any knee brace that does not extend below the pants.

Officials should be extra vigilant for missing knee pads on receivers and missing tailbone protectors on linemen, who may think the pads will slow them down.

Prior to a game, the head coach must verify to the umpire and referee that all his players are legally equipped and know how to use the legal equipment. Coaches must instruct players on how to wear equipment properly, and they must wear all mandatory equipment when participating in the game.

When required equipment is missing or illegal equipment is found, correction must be made before the player participates.

Knee pads may extend below the pants. Knee pads may be worn over the pants if a legal knee pad is also worn under the pants. Knee braces may NOT be worn over the pants

Thoughts To Think About From Game Observations

- 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 up if there is the possibility of it coming into play.
- 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 (and only then) do we worry about getting a football back onto the field

- Umpires often have the best look on catches and traps, particularly those in the middle of the field—need to pivot after ball crosses head.
- Too many officials giving signals when it is not their call. Let the calling official make the call and cover your area of work. A second signal can complicate matters and generally should not be used.
- There is never any hurry to signal except on a wind and kill on a first down. Slow whistle—slow flag—slow beanbag.
- Counting players—Officials need to count players every down, it matters
- We don't ever want to toss a ball to a wing official to place the ball for a measurement. The ball should be run over to the wing official and he will place it at his feet for the measurement.
- You must see the whole play when calling an infraction. Make the fouls be solid before making a call

The Back Judge Position

The back judge needs to be involved in the game as you are the hardest working official on the field with ball control from sideline to sideline. At the snap retreat a step or two as you read your keys. **THEN REACT**. The retreat gets you going in the proper direction if you have a deep route by an eligible receiver. The read will give you indication of what type of play you have and where the play is going.

Focus Inside Out

The perspective for scrimmage plays and punts should be inside looking out (from the field of play to the sidelines). The goal is to keep players boxed in so that a play is viewed from more than one angle. A wing official may miss an infraction and the back judge will see it because of a different perspective. Start between the uprights and do not go outside the hash marks while ball is live. **DO NOT CHASE THE PLAY**. When the ball becomes dead is a side zone you will move into the side zone to be a dead ball official. You need to hustle to the area when a play ends out of bounds to police player action that moves across the sideline. The Back Judge must strive to keep all 22 (18) players in view when the play ends. The Back Judge should accordion in toward the players and not retreat until the players have separated.

Keep Play In Front Of You

As a back judge, except some kick situations, you only want one viewpoint: coming towards you. You never want to get trapped in a position where you are trailing a runner or running behind a receiver. Always work to keep the play in front of you and get to the goal line or end line on plays involving the front or back of the end zone. Do not give a touchdown signal while running. If the runner goes into the end zone ahead of you, get to the goal line as soon as you can, stop and give the touchdown signal.

Beanbag Usage During Kicks

The primary reason for a beanbag during a scrimmage kick is to mark a spot of first touching and to mark the possession spot (end of the kick). The possession spot must always be bagged since it may be needed for post-scrimmage kick enforcement. Keep a beanbag in your throwing hand during a kick. A beanbag does not to be thrown a great distance as it does not have to land on the precise blade of grass. It should be dropped and not launched. If you do not know if you should drop a beanbag, drop it. There is no such thing as an 'inadvertent beanbag' and you can pick it up if dropped in error.

Pregame Determinations

Tell wing officials when you will give up the goal line to them (give them responsibility for calling plays at the goal line) when the offense is inside typically team B's 15 yard line. Back judge is a position that requires more patience than working other positions because you are not involved in every play. However, the plays involving the back judge can be the most critical ones in the game. Positioning and anticipation are key aspects to the back judge experience.

Visible Count—Five Second Count

Recommended crew communication signal is for back judge (five game officials crew) or by referee (four game officials crew) to provide a visible count of the last five seconds when on-field 25-second clocks are not utilized.

It is acceptable to raise arm at 10 seconds or five seconds then provide visible count of last five seconds. Officials need to communicate with the coaches during pre-game conference as to which method is going to be used.

Reminder

The number one responsibility for game officials must be player safety. Any initiation of contact with the helmet is illegal; therefore, these fouls must be penalized consistently and without warning. Players must avoid illegal helmet contact, coaches must teach legal contact and officials must enforce the rule.

Officials Quiz 2017

Question 1: An offensive and defensive player simultaneously gain possession of a live ball which is a scrimmage kick muffed by the receiving team beyond the neutral zone. What is the ruling? Who does the ball belong to?

Question 2: During an interception return, the linesman unintentionally runs into a assistant coach between the restraining line and the sideline! What is the ruling?

Question 3: PENALTY ENFORCEMENT: What fouls by B give A an automatic first down?

Question 4: PENALTY ENFORCEMENT: Where is the penalty for an illegal forward pass from beyond the neutral zone enforced?

Question 5: It is first and 10 for Team A from its own 40 yardline. A21 advances the ball to Team A's 45 yardline when B44 grabs and twists A21's facemask. A21 reaches the 50 yardline and fumbles, where B12 recovers the ball. What is the ruling?

Question 6: B45 intercepts A12's legal forward pass at his own six yardline. B45 retreats to his own end zone and is downed there. During B45's run, B78 clips A65 in the end zone. What is the ruling?

Question 7: First and 10 on Team A's 20 yardline. A12 completes a pass for a 20 yard gain. Defensive end B87 hits A12 well after the pass is thrown. Where is the penalty enforced?

Question 8: PENALTY ENFORCEMENT: What fouls by the offensive team for which the penalty includes loss of down?

Question 9: Fourth and 10 at the Team B's 20 yard line. Team A comes to the line with A49 at right tackle. Only four players on the line are numbered 50-79. Before the snap, A11 shifts by dropping back 10 yards into a shotgun formation. A11 subsequently takes the long snap and throws a touchdown pass to A88. Is this a legal play?

Question 10: Third and 25 at Team A's 20 yard line. A13 drops back to pass and scrambles. A13 is pulled to the ground by his face mask by B54 at the (A) A 15 yard line; (B) A25 yard line. Where will the face mask penalty be enforced?

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.timmings@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.

Quiz Answers

Ruling 1: Simultaneous catch, opposing players have simultaneous joint possession; If there is simultaneous recovery of a free kick or scrimmage kick, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team.

Ruling 2: Unintentional contact with a game official in the restricted area—15 yards—nonplayer foul. For the first offense, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. For the second offense—15 yards from the succeeding spot and disqualification of the head coach.

Ruling 3: The following fouls by Team B that give Team A an automatic first down: roughing the kicker or holder; roughing the passer; roughing the snapper.

Ruling 4: Penalty enforced from the end of the run. Loss of 5 yards and loss of down.

Ruling 5: Because Team B fouled prior to gaining possession, Team A cannot keep the ball. The ball is returned to Team A and the penalty is enforced from the spot of the fumble. It will be Team A's ball, first and 10 from Team B's 35 yardline.

Ruling 6: Safety. The result of the play is a safety because the team in possession is responsible for forcing the ball across the goal line. Acceptance of the penalty also results in a safety because the enforcement spot is in the end zone.

Ruling 7: Roughing the passer on a completed forward pass is enforced from the dead-ball spot when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession.

Ruling 8: Illegal forward handling; illegal forward pass; and illegal touching of a forward pass. No foul causes loss of the ball. The defensive pass interference does not include an automatic first down and the penalty for offensive pass interference does not include loss of down.

Ruling 9: Legal play. At the snap, Team A was in a scrimmage kick formation; and the numbering exception applies, even if there is no kick.

Ruling 10: It is a running play and the 15-yard penalty is enforced from the end of the run. In (a), it will be third and 15 at Team A's 30 yard line. In (B), it will be third and five at the Team A's 40 yard line.

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.
