

South Dakota High School Activities Association

2017 Football Newsletter No. 8

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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% each and every game we officiate.

There is no excuse for making errors on rules enforcement and not using proper positioning and proper mechanics. We have to 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 to 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 very best.

Finish The Season Strong

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=eWLPgwy9GXk&feature=youtu.be>

Snapping The Ball

A snap is a backward pass. The snap must be one continuous backward motion in which the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper. A snap ends when the ball touches the ground or a backfield player before it touches a Team A lineman.

The scrimmage down starts with a legal snap, and the ball remains dead if the snap is illegal.

After the continuous backward motion by the snapper, the snapper cannot legally hold the ball while waiting for a Team A lineman or running back to take ball from this position. This action would be an illegal snap. The official should blow the play dead when it is obvious the snapper still has the ball.

Equipment & Uniforms

All officials must enforce the uniform and equipment rules consistently each and every week. The football official's observers continue to see teams with jerseys that are NOT covering the shoulder pads, rib pads and auxiliary back pads. All crews must be diligent in getting players and coaches to make sure all of these pads are covered by a jersey which is required by rule. We are also seeing instances of players with football pants are NOT completely covering the knee.

Make sure that all play card wristbands are worn on the wrist, not on the belt.

All officials shall observe players in their pregame warm-ups. If an official observes any equipment violations 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.

The pregame is the only time verbal warnings shall be issued! Officials are encouraged to use preventative officiating techniques and good communication skills to avoid unnecessary penalties throughout the game.

Dead Ball Officiating—False Starts/Encroachment

For dead-ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, the flag should be tossed into the air directly in front of the officials.

When wing officials throw a flag for a dead-ball foul prior to the snap, they should jog slowly toward the middle of the field to report the foul to the Referee. Remember to practice good dead-ball officiating during the jog; if a player has crossed the neutral zone and contacted an opponent, the contacted opponent may try to retaliate.

The observers are seeing a number of wing officials being very lackadaisical in moving toward the players to stop the play following a false start or encroachment foul. There is very little movement by the calling official or other wing officials or the umpire to move toward the players to prevent possible unnecessary contact between players.

Wing officials need to hold that position to observe players until they separate.

Avoid signaling the foul rather than reporting the foul to the Referee because another official may have a different foul.

Injury Time Out

During a injury time-out, the coach and/or such attendants as may be deemed necessary by the referee may, with permission, enter to attend the injured player(s). Officials should not attempt to diagnose or help treat the injured player.

Official's main duties at this point are to observe other players and allow clear access to the injured player. Officials need to direct players and coaches toward their respective team-bench areas.

When an official's time-out is granted due to an injury, only an Outside 9-Yard Mark Conference (one or more team members and one or more coaches directly in front of the team box within 9 yards of the sideline) may be used. That conference provides an opportunity for players to get water.

If the injured player is being attended in the area outside the 9-yard marks, the game officials should relocate the conference outside the 9-yard marks to an area that allows for uninhibited access to the injured player by all appropriate health-care professionals.

Officials need to make sure that the summoned trainer or trainers or coaches are not on the field for coaching purposes.

False Starts

After the ball is ready for play and before the snap begins, no false start shall be made by any Team A player. It is a false start if a shift or feigned charge simulates action at the snap; any act clearly intended to cause Team B to encroach; or Team A player on his line between the snapper and the player on the end of the line, after having placed a hand(s) on or near the ground, moves his hand(s) or make any quick movement.

In judging the offensive team's intent, the game officials should consider whether players move to a new position, the speed and abruptness of movement, down and distance or otherwise simulate action at the snap with the start of a play.

Whether or not the action by Team A draws Team B into the neutral zone should not be the determining factor in ruling a false start foul.

If a false start causes Team B to encroach, only the false start is penalized.

Examples would be the head bob by the quarterback or the quarterback moving quickly up to the line of scrimmage for a direct snap.

Muff Kicks Into End Zone--Review

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

Enforcement--Review

Fouls During A Loose-Ball Play

If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic spot is the previous spot unless post-scrimmage kick enforcement applies (10-4-2b). When the foul is by the *team in possession* and occurs behind the basic spot, the penalty is enforced from the *spot of the foul*.

PLAY 1: During a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone, snapper A58 holds B74 behind the neutral zone.

RULING 1: Penalize Team A 10 yards from the spot of the foul. The basic spot is the previous spot because it is a loose ball play. The foul is behind the previous spot so the holding penalty has spot foul enforcement.

Fouls During A Running Play

If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic spot is the spot where the run ended, unless it is a foul by the offense (team in possession) behind the end of the run. In that case, enforce the penalty from the spot of the foul (2-41-1; 10-4-4). If the runner does not lose possession, the ball becomes dead when the run ends.

PLAY 2: First and 10 on Team A's 46 yard line. A1 is sacked on his 35 yard line. During the down, A2 clipped at his (a) 47 yard line, (b) 41 yard line, or (c) 33 yard line. In each case, the penalty is accepted.

RULING 2: The basic spot is where the run ended, Team A's 35 yard line. In (a) and (b), the penalties are enforced from the 35 yard line (end of run) back to Team A's 20 yard line. In (c), it is a spot foul moving the ball back to Team A's 18 yard line as the foul is behind the end of the run.

Starting and Stopping The Clock

It is important to remember on any given play, there may be more than one reason for the clock to stop, such as awarding a first down to Team A and the ball carrier going out of bounds. Whenever there is more than one reason for stopping the clock, and of those reasons requires it start on the snap, then starting on the snap prevails (3-4-2b3). The reasons for starting the clock on the snap "outrank" those for starting it on the ready.

When the administration of a penalty is one of the reasons for stopping the clock, the decision to start the clock is made on the following principle: the clock should start just as it would if the foul had not occurred. One exception is an accepted penalty for delay of game, after which the clock always starts on the snap.

The game clock starts on the snap whenever Team B is awarded a new series; however, a new series is not awarded to Team B until all acts which occurred during the down, including penalties for other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike fouls, are considered.

The clock *always* stops after a fourth down play. The reason for stopping it will vary and depending on that reason, it may start on the snap or on the ready, but in all cases the clock will be stopped.

On all free kicks downs, the clock starts when the ball is touched other than first touching by Team K, nor does it ever start on the ready-for-play signal prior to a free kick down. The same applies if the free kick down is replayed.

If officials need to stop the clock for administrative purposes, or it is stopped in error, such as an official mistaking the rear stake for the line-to-gain, it should be restarted as soon as possible.

PLAY: Third and three on Team A's 37 yard line. A21 gains about three yards, but fumbles. The officials cannot determine who has recovered the fumble, so the clock is stopped. A21 is found to be in possession of the ball and he is (a) short of, or (b) beyond the line-to-gain.

RULING: In (a), the referee will immediately start the clock. In (b), the referee will start the clock on the ready-for-play signal since Team A is awarded a new series.

Call The Obvious

- Credibility begins with getting the easy call right (false starts, encroachment, etc.). Miss the obvious and you'll have a hard time selling and having credibility with the tough call.
- The best officials are those that let the game come to them

- They see what is happening, absorb the information, take an extra second to process the information and decide the impact on the play
- The best officials know the rules but don't use them as a crutch
- Good officials communicate well with players, coaches and other officials
- Good officials are best at "people skills"
- The best officials aren't afraid to make the game deciding call or no-call
- The best officials are lifelong learners
- Remember it's the players game, not the officials
- Being able to handle the gray areas of judgment and enforcement is critical in applying the spirit and intent, which the rule was written

Officials Quiz 2017

Question 1: A game official stops the clock for an injury to player A22. While the injured player is being attended to, the coach of Team B attempts to hold a conference (a) between the 9-yard marks; or (b) in front of the team box outside the 9-yard marks. Are both legal conferences?

Question 2: Runner A20 is grabbed by the back of the collar by B50 on the B-2 yard line, as A20 crosses the goal line for a TD, B50 pulls him down backwards by the collar. What is the ruling?

Question 3: Team A's ball for a try from the B-3 yard line. As A12 rolls out he is tackled by the facemask by B75 on the B-12 yard line. What is the ruling?

Question 4: 4th and 10 from the A-20 yard line, Team A punts. R20 gives a valid fair catch signal, but muffs the kick at the B-40 yard line. During the loose ball, the Back Judge sounds his whistle before K15 recovers the ball at the B -45 yard line. What is the ruling?

Question 5: 3rd and 10 from the B-45. A89 catches a pass at the B-38 and runs to the B-5 where he is downed in bounds. During A89's run, A50 blocked B10 in the back on the B-30. What is the ruling?

Question 6: 3rd & 20, line of scrimmage is 30; Hands to face of OL at 25; QB gets sacked behind LOS at 20. Possibly spot and repeat down. 3rd & 20 (5 yd) or 3rd 10 (15 yd). What is the ruling?

Question 7: During a legal forward pass which crosses the neutral zone, A1 is illegally in motion at the snap. B1 intercepts and during his return, B2 clips A2. What is the ruling?

Question 8: During a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone, snapper A58 holds B74 behind the neutral zone. What is the ruling?

Question 9: On a try, B34 intercepts A18's pass and returns the ball over Team A's goal line. During B34's run, B73 clips. Do you enforce the clipping penalty?

Question 10: While a legal forward pass is in flight: B1 interferes with eligible A1 and then there is an inadvertent whistle. Do you enforce the penalty?

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 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: In (a) the conference must move outside the 9-yard marks; in (b) legal conference.

Ruling 2: A horse collar foul should be called. Team A will have the option of taking the 15 yard penalty either on the succeeding kick-off or half the distance to the goal for the try.

Ruling 3: 15 yard personal foul facemask foul by B75, it will be enforced 1/2 the distance to the goal from the spot of the foul, and A will re-try from the B-6 yard line.

Ruling 4: Inadvertent whistle. The down will be replayed, Team A 4th and 10 from the A-20, clock on Ready For Play. Reminder for the covering down field official to not have a quick whistle on these punt plays, make sure the ball is caught before sounding your whistle.

Ruling 5: Illegal block in back, the 10 yard penalty will be administered from the spot of the foul making it 3rd and 5 from the B-40, clock on Ready for Play. (The basic spot is not the previous spot, the foul occurred during the running play)

Ruling 6: Spot of this foul is the end of the run. It is a running play so basic spot is end of the run. In this play you would enforce from the 20 to the 35 and repeat the down.

Ruling 7: The illegal motion by A1 and the clipping by B2 are both live-ball fouls, but because the foul by B2 followed a change of team possession, they do not automatically constitute a double foul. If the captain of Team B declines the penalty for the illegal motion by A1, Team B will retain possession, but the penalty for clipping by B2 must be enforced. If B accepts the penalty for the illegal motion by A1, it is a double foul and the down will be replayed

Ruling 8: Penalize Team A 10 yards from the spot of the foul. The basic spot is the previous spot because it is a loose ball play. The foul is behind the previous spot so the holding penalty has spot foul enforcement.

Ruling 9: The ball is dead and the try ends when Team B intercepts. The officials should not allow the play to continue. The clipping penalty is not enforced unless it is flagrant.

Ruling 10: If the captain accepts the penalty for a foul which occurred prior to the inadvertent whistle, the penalty takes precedence. Penalty would be enforced 15 yards in advance of the previous spot.

**Preventative Officiating Is Key
To Being A Great Dead Ball Officials
Hustle, Presence, Voice, Whistle**
