

South Dakota High School Activities Association

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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

Extra Time-Out Due To Heat

The SDHSAA authorizes all football officials to call a "heat time-out" in the event of heat/humidity. This time-out is not charged to either team. The officials are authorized to call a heat time-out somewhere close to the mid-point of each quarter. It should be taken at a time when it will not strategically benefit or work to the disadvantage of either team--after a change of possession. DO NOT take a heat time out when team is driving for a score.

The decision as to whether heat time-outs will be taken should be dealt with prior to the start of game—it is always better to error on the side of safety. The rationale for taking these additional time-outs is concern for the safety and health of the student/athletes. The additional time-outs will enable the athletes to cool down a bit and also get a drink of water or some other appropriate fluids.

If you use heat time-outs during the first half, you must use the heat time-outs during the second half even if there is a change in the weather conditions.

Officials plan to allow for longer breaks during the natural course of play (i.e.: going 90 seconds between score and kick-off, etc.) so athletes can cool down and get a drink of water.

Updated Lightning & Severe Weather Policy

In March of 2018, the NFHS Updated their language in regard to lightning and severe weather. A full copy of this updated policy has been attached as the last page of this week's newsletter, and is located in the Appendix section of all NFHS Rules materials sent out this year for outdoor activities.

The new language in the NFHS Policy reads: *“When lightning detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices, and thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning detection device.”*

Also: *“At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.”*

What does this all mean? Generally, the 30-minute rule remains in effect (30 minutes must pass from the last visible lightning strike or audible thunder before resuming play). However, in some situations where lightning detection devices are available, and it can be verified that visible lightning is more than 10 miles away, and no thunder is heard, play may continue or not be further delayed. Coordinate with local site management to make decisions on this policy, and always err on the side of caution and player safety!

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 3rd and 4th 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 during the enforcement of penalties unless issues surrounding the enforcement will take significant time that officials would signal for an officials' timeout.
 - The game clock will continue to run after a change of team possession.
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2018 Football Rule Changes

Improperly equipped player shall be replaced for at least one down.

Rationale: Prior to the game, the head coach is responsible for verifying that the players are legally equipped and will not use illegal equipment. The penalty for a player who is not properly equipped has changed from a distance penalty against the team to removal of that player for at least one down. The penalty provisions for any use of illegal equipment remain unchanged and result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul charged to the head coach.

Defenseless player provisions for passer clarified.

Rationale: The committee clarified that defenseless player provisions do not apply to a passer until a legal forward pass is thrown. The passer continues to be a defenseless player until the pass ends or the passer moves to participate in the play.

Signal change for free kick infractions.

Rationale: The signal for free kick infractions, other than encroachment of the neutral zone, has been changed from signal 18 to signal 19.

New penalty option adopted for fouls by kicking team.

Rationale: In an effort to reduce re-kicks, further minimize risk and ensure that appropriate penalties are in place for all fouls, the committee has added an option for fouls committed by the kicking team during free and scrimmage kicks. The change would allow the receiving team all of the previous options as well as accepting the distance penalty at the end of the down.

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 ejected. 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 a unsportsmanlike foul. If officials deem the personal foul action to be flagrant—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.

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 has been 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.

Pre-Snap Routine

Football officials should have a pre-snap routine that runs through their mind before every snap. This mental exercise provides the repetition and confidence before each play to be prepared for possible rules violations. Following are some important pre-snap points:

- Down and distance
 - Player count
 - Line to gain for a first down
 - Confirm down, distance and player count with other officials
 - Status of clock: running or stopped
 - Amount of time left in quarter
 - Number of time outs remaining for each team
 - Legal substitutions
 - Communication to crewmates about goal line responsibilities
 - Communication to crewmates about stopping clock if fourth down
 - Remind yourself to give an extra second before blowing the whistle, throwing a flag or giving a signal
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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.

Blocking Below The Waist

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.

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.

Huddle

It is not a foul for Team A to break the huddle with 12 players as long as any replaced player begins to leave the field within three seconds of the arrival of his substitute (2-32-15, 3-7-1, 3.7.1A).

PLAY: Team A has 11 players in the huddle when A12 enters the game. After about two seconds have elapsed, Team A breaks the huddle with 12 players. A5 continues to his team bench area.

RULING: Legal.

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

Unsuccessful Field Goal Kick

In NFHS, if an attempted field goal is unsuccessful, it is treated the same as a punt. If the ball breaks the plane of Team R's goal line, it is immediately dead and a touchback results. If the kick goes out of bounds in the field of play or becomes dead inbounds, the ball belongs to Team R where it was declared dead.

Play: Fourth and 10 on team R's 30 yard line. K1's field goal attempt is well short and the kick goes out of bounds (a) on team R's one yard line, or (b) in the end zone.

Ruling: In NFHS, in (a) it is team R's ball on its one yard line. In (b), it's a touchback.

Officials Quiz 2018

Question 1: On a try, B34 intercepts A18's pass and returns the ball over Team A's goal line. During B34's run, B73 clips. Where is the penalty enforced?

Question 2: 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 3: Player R33 has eye shade that covers his entire face with designs that look like the band "Kiss". Is this eye shade placement legal?

Question 4: With four minutes remaining in the halftime intermission, both teams are on the field and are warming up. The coaches agree to start the second half without a formal warm-up period. What is the ruling?

Question 5: 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 6: Immediately after A55 snaps from a scrimmage kick formation and before A55 has a chance to look up to defend himself, B24 tries to shoot the gap between A55 and guard A67. In the process, B34 places a hand on and pushes down on A55's right shoulder, causing him to fall. What is the ruling?

Question 7: First and 10 for Team A from its own 30 yard line. A1 drops back and throws a legal forward pass intended for A2, who is at Team A's 27 yard line. Before the pass reaches A2, B3 blocks A2 above the waist and from the front. The pass falls incomplete. Do you have a pass interference penalty on B3?

Question 8: Fourth and seven at the Team K's 35 yard line. Team K has five players in the backfield at the snap. R24 catches the punt at Team R's 30 yard line and is tackled at the Team R's 35 yard line. Where is the penalty enforced?

Question 9: 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 10: 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?

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: The officials should not allow such a play to continue because the ball is dead and the try ends when Team B gains possession. The clipping penalty is not enforced unless it is flagrant.

Ruling 2: 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 3: NO. Eye shade must be a single, solid stroke with no words, numbers, logos or other symbols within the eye shade.

Ruling 4: The three minute warm-up period must be held. With mutual consent of the coaches, the referee may shorten the halftime intermission, but a separate three minute warm-up must be put on the clock.

Ruling 5: The 15 yard penalty is enforced on the second half kickoff.

Ruling 6: Legal play by B24 because he did not play directly through A55.

Ruling 7: The contact by B3 is not pass interference because the pass is behind the line. If B3 tackled, grabbed or otherwise restricted A2, he would be guilty of defensive holding.

Ruling 8: If Team R accepts the penalty for the illegal formation foul they may elect to have fourth down replayed at the K30 or they may put the ball in play at the Team R 40 yard line. The clock starts on the ready if down is replayed or on the snap if Team R is to next snap the ball.

Ruling 9: 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 10: 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.

MIBT--Make It Be There!



GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
 2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:
 - a. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
 3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
 - b. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - d. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.
- * – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.*
4. Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
 5. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season.