

South Dakota High School Activities Association

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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 is excited to bring a new opportunity to help progress football officiating in our state. 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=mXwEXCA8KZk&feature=youtu.be>

Defenseless Player and Blindside Blocks

ILLEGAL CONTACT

SDHSAA officials have been doing a good job officiating the illegal contact fouls and blindside hits, calling the foul where necessary and not calling a foul on legal hits. Officials need to keep up the good work and remember to educate players and coaches when possible. Remember there is no place for these illegal hits in the high school game.

A blindside block is a block outside of the free-blocking zone against an opponent other than the runner who does not have a reasonable opportunity to see the blocker approaching.

A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury. A player who initiates contact against a defenseless player is responsible for making legal contact. When in question, a player is defenseless.

Whether the block was initiated with the open hands. Any forceful blindside block outside the free-blocking zone must be initiated with open hands. Blocks initiated with the shoulder or body is dangerous because of the amount of force they generate. Blocks initiated with open hands are significantly less dangerous because they do not typically generate that same amount of force. The open-hands requirement is intended to reduce the force associated with blindside blocks.

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As a result, game officials should consider two things in determining whether a blocker has complied with the open-hand requirement. First, the blocker's initial contact with his opponent must be with open hands if the block is forceful. Second, the force of the block should come from the blocker's hands and arms rather than from his shoulder or body.

Game officials must use proper mechanics on these plays and be in position to observe players throwing blindside blocks. Game officials should take the entire block into consideration.

By teaching these techniques and consistently penalizing infractions, coaches and game officials will have continued taking positive steps toward reinforcing player safety, minimizing injury, and removing unnecessary and excessive contact from the game.

Blocking

Blocks that start on the side and subsequently end up in the back are not fouls as long as contact is maintained throughout the block. Officials need to see the block from the beginning to the end.

It's important to distinguish between contact from the side, which is legal, and illegal blocks in the back, which carry a penalty. One criterion is whether the person being blocked had an opportunity to see the blocker before being hit. A block from the side, even though it results in a player being put on the ground, is not a foul unless for some other reason it is also a personal foul.

Enforcement Spots

1. Live ball personal foul (foul while ball is live)—if the runner has not crossed the goal line the penalty would be enforced from the spot of the foul.
 - If an unnecessary (but legal) block against defenseless player occurs while the runner is still running in the field of play (live ball)—you would enforce the penalty from the spot of the foul—take away the touchdown.
 - Rationale: safety rules for contact against players who are deemed defenseless
2. Dead ball personal foul—if the runner has crossed the goal line, goes out of bounds or is down by rule before the personal foul--you have a dead ball situation so you would count the touchdown and enforce penalty on extra point try or kickoff.
3. Live ball unsportsmanlike foul—if runner has not crossed goal line and you have an unsportsmanlike penalty you would consider the unsportsmanlike foul as a dead ball foul—live ball foul penalized as a dead ball foul. Count touchdown—enforce penalty on extra point try or kickoff.
4. Dead ball unsportsmanlike foul—runner has crossed goal line, goes out of bounds or is down by rule (dead ball). Count touchdown—enforce penalty on extra point try or kickoff.

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 grabs, unnecessary roughness, excessive or targeting fouls are among those considered personal fouls.

Coaches need to teach their players that the play kills itself. Players need to be taught when the “ball is dead by rule.” If players “hit until the whistle,” often they are hitting late as the whistle signifies the ball is already dead. The officials whistle only indicates that the down is over. Football players need to understand when a player is down by action or out of the play.

Free Kick After Fair Catch

There are no prohibitions against using a "kickoff" tee for a free kick following a fair catch or an awarded fair catch. The ball also may be held in position on the ground or on a kicking “block” by a place-kick holder who shall be a teammate of the kicker.

After a made or awarded fair catch, the new Team A has the choice to put the ball in play via a snap or a free kick anywhere between the inbounds lines. A timeout may be taken to make that decision. The right to make that choice remains if: (1) a dead-ball foul occurs before the ball becomes live for the first down-down play, (2) a foul occurs during the down following the fair catch and the penalty is accepted.

The team’s lineup as if for a kickoff. Treat this situation after a fair catch or an awarded fair catch as it being just a regular kickoff that can score and all the rules are the same as on a regular free kick. This is one of times a field goal may be scored by a free kick.

The captain may choose to free kick from any point between the hash marks on the yard line through the spot of the catch when a fair catch is made.

Rules Related Items To Review

- Cleanup illegal equipment early, don’t leave it for next week’s crew to handle. Pants with knee pads must cover the knee, jerseys must completely cover ALL pads, rubber bands and other bands worn on the bicep, calf, thigh etc. are illegal.

- Eye shade can only be one solid stroke beneath the eye with no words, numbers, logos or other symbols—get this cleaned up pre-game
- Play cards cannot be worn on the belt, only the wrist or arm
- Concussions – if a player is exhibiting concussion like symptoms, officials must send them from the game and advise the head coach that the athlete is exhibiting concussion like symptoms. If the athlete returns to the game they shall be monitored like any other player.
- Continue to be aware and penalize illegal hits. Targeting, illegal helmet contact, unnecessary/excessive hits away from the play, etc. should be penalized. Officials and coaches have to continue to try to remove these types of illegal hits from the game.
- The holder on a field goal and PAT attempt must rise from his knee if he wishes to pass or hand the ball out of this formation; if he stays on his knee and passes or hands the ball, the play is dead.
- Tinted eyewear (eyeglasses, safety spec., etc.) worn on the face under the face mask are legal. Tinted visors are illegal, all visors attached to the face mask must be clear.
- The rubber bands (“Livestrong” type) worn on the wrists are illegal, have them removed before playing. This is a safety issue and could result in a player’s fingers being injured.
- If gloves are worn in the game, do not let the players participate with them strapped to their belt.
- A different kicking ball cannot be used during the same series of downs. A team may use an approved ball of their choice for the try if they score a TD after a change of possession.
- An ineligible team A player by number or position can throw a legal forward pass, and also an ineligible team A player can catch or recover a backward pass and advance.
- Offensive pass interference and defensive pass interference are not automatic first downs
- An injured player for whom the clock was stopped must stay out one play unless the 2nd or 4th period ended. They cannot be “bought” back in with a team timeout.
- A missed field goal that breaks the plane of R’s goal line and is unsuccessful is a touch back. Do not bring the ball back to the previous spot.
- It is CRITICAL that the head coach be notified by the referee of all unsportsmanlike fouls against him or any member of his coaching staff and the time and reason noted on the game card.
- Reminder, if there is a touchdown scored by Team A but there is a live ball personal foul for an illegal contact hit by Team A behind the play, the touchdown does not score and the penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul. If the foul is on Team B, then score the touchdown.

Blocking Below The Waist - - Chop Block

A chop block is a combination block by two or more teammates against an opponent other than the runner, with or without delay, where one of the blocks is at the knee or below and the other block is above the knee.

The penalty for a chop block is 15 yards and is enforced under the “all-but-one” principle.

Such contact outside the free blocking zone is an illegal block below the waist. If the opponent has disengaged from the first block when the second block occurs, there cannot be a chop block.

Some key points regarding chop blocks.

- Both the offensive and defensive players can be guilty of a chop block
- Two high blocks are legal in situations where blocking is allowed
- Two low blocks are legal in situations where low blocks are legal
- High-Low or Low-High blocks are chop blocks
- When in doubt, the contact is at the knee or below

PLAY: Second and 10 from Team A's 33 yard line. While right guard A68 is blocking defensive tackle B76 above the waist at A's 36 yard line, left guard A60 pulls and joins A68 in a double-team. A60 blocks B76 at the knees.

RULING: Chop Block (high-low). If accepted Team A will be penalized 15 yards.

Officials Quiz 2018

Question 1: 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. When does the clock start?

Question 2: 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 3: 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 4: 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 5: 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 6: With six minutes to go in the second period, an official signals the game clock to stop when he sees A1 limping from a twisted ankle. Within a few seconds, A1 says he feels fine and wants to remain in the game. Team B is then granted a charged team timeout. Can A1 remain in the game?

Question 7: Second and 15 at Team B's 18 yard line. Player A34 gains four yards and goes out of bounds at Team B's 14 yard line where he is hit by B70 after the ball is dead. Where is the ball placed and what is the down and distance?

Question 8: Eligible receiver A23 is in his opponent's end zone and running forward toward the field of play. While in the end zone he leaps to receive a forward pass and first lands (a) at Team B's one yard line where he is downed, or (b) out of bounds. Do you a completed pass?

Question 9: During a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone, snapper A58 holds B74 behind the neutral zone. Where is the spot of enforcement?

Question 10: 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. Where is the spot of enforcement?

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 --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 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.

Ruling 2: In (a) the conference must move outside the 9-yard marks; in (b) legal conference.

Ruling 3: 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 4: 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 5: 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 6: Player A1 must leave the game for at least on down.

Ruling 7: Half the distance enforcement to Team B's seven yard line, no automatic first down. Third and four.

Ruling 8: In (a), Team A's ball at Team B's one yard line. In (b), an incomplete pass.

Ruling 9: 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 10: 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.

You get in trouble if you are not prepared for the worst possible situation that could occur on every play