

South Dakota High School Activities Association

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Disruption of Games Due To Weather (Lightning, Etc.)

Officials and school personnel should always rule on the side of safety and postpone or delay any outside activity when threatening weather exists. If there is any doubt as to whether the contest should be suspended, it is always better to error on the side of safety. The decision to suspend a contest lies with the game officials.

Local school administrators should not hesitate to discuss a suspension of play with the officials if they feel weather conditions warrant. Teams should be sent to their respective locker rooms or buses and fans should be instructed to leave the stadium.

In the event that the contest cannot be resumed after a delay, based upon mutual agreement of both schools (not the officials), one of the following may be selected:

1. Resume play from the point of interruption at a later date
2. Declare a winner or loser based upon the score at the time of interruption

If no amicable solution can be reached, the SDHSAA Office will intervene with the two teams in question.

If there is a delay, the game is suspended at the exact point of stoppage, so make sure you record all the game information such as time, score, down, distance, placement of ball, etc.

Review the guidelines for lightning or thunder disturbances on Page 102 of the 2019 NFHS rule book.

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 (mechanics and rules review):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uc6V2mxi5-M&feature=youtu.be>

Formation Rule Altered

Changes to Rules 2-14-1 and 7-2-3a

Team A now needs only five players on its line at the snap, but cannot have more than four players in the backfield. That is a departure from the old rule to which Team A fouled by not having seven players on its line at the snap. This situation will happen when Team A has less than 11 players in the game. This change will make it easier to identify legal and illegal offensive formations.

Of the linemen, at least five must be numbered 50-79 unless Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation. In a nine-man game, there is no number restriction for linemen.

EXAMPLE: Team A lines up with their normal offensive team, but with only 10 players. The formation includes the regular four backs. The missing player is (a) tight end A88, or (b) tackle A76.

RULING: In (a) the formation is legal because there are no more than four players in the backfield and at least five players wearing jerseys numbered 50-79 on the scrimmage line. In (b), it is a live-ball foul for an illegal formation because there are only four players wearing jerseys numbered 50-79 on the scrimmage line.

In summary, the illegal formations are (1) fewer than five players (or three) on the line; (2) more than four players in the backfield; (3) fewer than five players on the line numbered 50-79, except when in a scrimmage kick formation on fourth down or a try.

These are not fouls until the ball is snapped, which means Team A may legally shift to correct the situation and make the formation legal prior to the snap. Illegal formation fouls carry a five-yard penalty from the previous spot.

Nine Man Football Game

During the nine-man football game, there still must remain three ineligible on the line of scrimmage.

EXAMPLE: Team A comes to the line with four on the line and four in the backfield (playing with eight players). In (a) running back A24 carries ball for eight yard gain. In (b), the two Team A players on the end of the line of scrimmage both go downfield for a pass. Pass down field is completed.

RULING: In (a), legal play because there are no more than four players in the backfield. In (b), both players on end of line of scrimmage would be considered in violation for ineligible downfield and/or illegal formation. There's no declaration with the numbering system in nine man football being what it is, so it's a delayed call to ensure that three lineman stay on the line of scrimmage. The challenge defensively, would be that in the example, you only need to cover one as a receiver, but don't know which it is at the snap.

Line Judge Mechanics

Scrimmage Kicks

The line judge will release on the snap, move downfield covering his side between the neutral zone and deep receiver(s). The line judge will need to know eligible receivers and numbering exceptions before snap.

After release take a peek to see if you are going to have a fake kick situation (pass or run). If you have a fake, stop and officiate blocks in front of the runner and then come back to get spot if needed.

On release with no fake punt, look out in the middle of field to watch blocks of the first wave of blockers.

Motion

Double wing formation: If both backs go in motion at the same time and have not made any movement that simulates the beginning of a play the play would continue because both backs could stop --reset--and remain motionless for one second before the snap which makes the play legal.

If both backs are still in motion, or, if one back stops and the other stays in motion, you would have an illegal shift foul at the snap. This foul is a live ball foul that carries a five-yard penalty from the previous spot. The defensive team could accept the five yard penalty from the previous spot and replay the down or decline the penalty and take the result of the play.

The philosophy is some acts can be corrected before the snap and are not a foul until the ball is snapped.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Most fouls cannot be called properly unless the whole act is observed.. To call a block below the waist, the official must see the initial contact. If the official doesn't, the official may not know if the blocker started with legal contact and then slid on the opponent's body. If the official doesn't see the initial contact on a potential block in the back, he may not know if the opponent turned on the blocker.

To get the call right, an official must get to the proper position. That is what mechanics manuals are all about. In most cases, angle is much more important than distance. That usually requires movement.

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.

Officials Quiz 2019

Question 1: During the last timed down of the fourth quarter, Player A22 scores a touchdown to reduce its deficit to one point. During the successful kick try, B77 roughs the kicker. Where is the penalty enforced?

Question 2: With no-time-outs remaining and fourth down with 40 seconds to go in the third period, Team K is preparing to punt into a strong wind. With 20 seconds remaining, K1 commits a false start. When does the clock start after penalty enforcement?

Question 3: Fourth and seven, K38, in position to punt while standing at the Team A's 7-yard line, muffs the snap from center. To prevent Team R from recovering the ball, K38 kicks it backward and out of the end zone. Is there a penalty for kicking the muff?

Question 4: Team A has ball fourth and eight. Player A24 gains six yards when he is tackled. After the whistles sounds, R73 is flagged for a late hit. Is the next play first and 10 for Team A?

Question 5: 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 6: 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 7: Second and 20 for Team A from its own 20 yard line. During A1's run, which ends at Team A's 22 yard line, B4 is flagged for a facemask foul for (a) just briefly grabbing A1's mask, or (b) grabbing A1's mask and giving it a good twist. Where is the penalty enforced?

Question 8: First and 10 from Team A's 20 yard line. Team A's forward pass is grabbed near the sideline at team A's 31 yard line. B4 then shoves A3 so he lands out of bounds at Team A's 32 yard line. Do you have a completed pass?

Question 9: First and 10 at Team A's 20-yard line. Player A42 gains four yards to Team A's 24-yard line and during the run Player A79 holds at Team A's 18 yard line. Where is the penalty enforced?

Question 10: Third and 10 for Team A at Team B's 16 yard line. A15's pass is incomplete but defensive pass interference occurs at (a) the four yard line, (b) at the one yard line, (c) in the end zone. What is the next down and distance for Team A?

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: Team A could choose to have the penalty for B77's for roughing on the try enforced from the previous spot with a replay of the down, or choose to have it enforced on the first play of overtime. If Team A begins the overtime on offense, it will snap from Team R's five yard line. If Team K begins on defense, Team R will snap from Team K's 25 yard line. In either case it will be first and goal.

Ruling 2: Penalize Team K 5 yards and start the clock with the snap. Under normal circumstances, the clock would start with the ready-for-play signal, but this would permit the period to end and K could then punt with the wind. K will not be permitted to gain this advantage by committing a foul to consume time.

Ruling 3: The result of the play is a safety. It is illegal to kick a loose ball. Team R may accept the penalty, which would be enforced half-the-distance to the goal from the spot of the foul with fourth down replayed.

Ruling 4: The series for Team A ended short of a first down. A new series is awarded Team B. The penalty for the late hit by R73 will be administered then the line-to-gain chains will be established. First and 10 for Team B.

Ruling 5: 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 6: 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 7: In (a), add five yards to the end of A1's run. The result is second and 13 from Team A's 27 yard line. In (b), add 15 yards to the end of A1's run, resulting in second and three from Team A's 37 yard line.

Ruling 8: The covering official must determine whether A3 would have landed inbounds had there not been any contact by B4. If the official judges A3 would have returned inbounds, he should rule the pass complete at the point where the ball crosses the sideline, the clock is stopped and starts on the snap. If the official judges B4's contact did not affect the landing spot, the pass is incomplete.

Ruling 9: The holding foul carries a 10 yard penalty. The all-but-one enforcement is from Team A's 18 yard line, so Team A is penalized half-the-distance, leaving the ball at Team A's nine yard line.

Ruling 10: In all cases, third and two for Team A at the eight yard line. Defensive pass interference does NOT include a automatic first down.

**Take Your Time - Slow Down - Slow Down - Slow Down
With Penalty Enforcement**

Quick Tip

Officials: *DO NOT* search for penalties and violations instead let the play, fouls and violations come to you.
