

South Dakota High School Activities Association

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Electronic Devices On The Sideline

Electronic communication devices may be used by coaches and non players on the sidelines as long as they are not used to communicate with players on the field. *NOTE: The term "non-players" includes athletes who are not participating in the current play.*

Electronic signage used to signal plays or other information from the sideline is illegal.

Each team is responsible for their own equipment - a home team does not need to provide video or headphone equipment to their opponents. The only requirement is that home teams must provide an area for visiting teams to film from and/or a coaching area in a pressbox that is comparable to what the home team has.

Officials should not concern themselves with video replay equipment or electronic devices being used on the sidelines; however, officials should enforce rules in regard to the use of the equipment as it pertains to on-the-field events.

During an outside the 9-yard marks conference, the coach may show players an electronic device and athletes may use headsets to confer with other coaches.

During an inside the 9-yard marks conference, only the coach may use either an electronic device or headset but may not show it to/share it with players.

Additionally, no radio or communication devices are allowed in the helmets of players in NFHS play.

Use of Drones in High School Sports

Drones/Unmanned Aerial Devices are similarly becoming more popular. Note that from the point when officials assume authority of the game/arrive on the playing field, drone use is limited. From the point the officials assume responsibility of the contest through the end of a contest, drones are not allowed to be flown inside of the "restricted area" of the playing field (any/all of the area within the two-yard belt that surrounds the playing field that is used as a barrier for all personnel).

Should officials encounter drone usage, they should contact game administration to have the device removed immediately.

Additional Equipment (Visors, Helmet Accessories, etc.)

The SDHSAA Office has become aware that there are a handful of coaches/programs that are presenting officials with doctor's notes or fraudulent letters claiming to have an exemption from the SDHSAA Office allowing illegal/additional equipment to be worn, such as tinted visors or helmet caps, etc.

Game officials still have the responsibility to check on casts/braces/etc to ensure they are legal and covered with the appropriate 1/2" thick padding, however, auxiliary equipment such as those defined in Rule 1-5-3 remain illegal and cannot be approved with a doctor's note.

At the present time, there are no active exceptions to this rule from the SDHSAA Office in play. If a coach presents you information otherwise, please confiscate the note, do not allow the player to play with the illegal equipment and contact the SDHSAA Office following your contest.

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=C-jpBxjZBMk&feature=youtu.be>

Muffed 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

Good Mechanics

Good mechanics make the difference between a football game that is well officiated and one that is not. 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.

Movement and compromise are the characteristics of football officiating. Twenty-two or eighteen players moving around, competing for space and position; the officials must utilize hustle, angles, distance and planned compromises to observe and control the action.

We have been watching a number of clips from 2019 SDHSAA football games. While looking at clips we also look at the mechanics and positioning of the football officials. Some of what we are seeing makes us wonder how much time football officials are studying the NFHS Football Officials Manual!!!

The mechanics are there for a reason—to get football officials in the best spot to have the angle and distance to see the play and make the correct call!

Forward/Backward Passes

A pass is forward if it is thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent end line. It is also a forward pass if a defensive player contacts the passer or the ball after the passer has started his arm forward. Only one forward pass may be thrown during a scrimmage down. A forward pass has crossed the neutral zone when the entire ball is beyond the neutral zone.

It makes no difference how a pass is thrown—it can be overhand, underhand, between the legs, with two hands, whatever. As long as the player starts his arm forward and the ball leaves the passers hand, it is a forward pass.

A forward pass is illegal if it is thrown when the passer is beyond the neutral zone; it is thrown by either team after a change of team possession during a down; it is the second forward pass by Team A during the down.

A backward pass is one which does not meet the requirements of a forward pass. If the initial direction is not forward, it is backward. A grounded backward pass is a live ball. A snap is also considered a backward pass, except when the ball is handed directly to the quarterback.

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 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.

Eligibility

At the snap, eligible receivers are those in the backfield or on the end of the line with a number 1 to 49 or 80 to 99. Interior linemen (regardless of number) and ends or backs numbered 50 to 79 are ineligible at the snap. Players numbered 50 to 79 inclusive cannot report to the referee to become eligible receivers.

Eligibility rules apply *only* to legal forward passes. Eligibility does not arise in the case of an illegal forward pass. If an ineligible player is downfield then an illegal pass is thrown, there is only one foul—for the pass, and not a second foul for the ineligible receiver being downfield.

During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone, interior offensive linemen and other ineligible Team A players are not allowed to advance downfield before the pass is thrown.

If a pass is caught by an ineligible receiver, the ball remains live and may be advanced. However, the penalty will be accepted, and the play negated, unless a subsequent fumble gives Team B possession of the ball.

An ineligible Team A player by number or position can throw a legal forward pass. An ineligible Team A player can catch or recover a backward pass and advance.

Backfield players numbered (50-79) would be considered an ineligible receiver (because of the number they are wearing) and may not advance beyond the expanded neutral zone on a legal forward pass play before a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral is in flight.

Ineligible Receivers

There is no foul for ineligible receivers downfield if the pass does not cross the neutral zone. Thus on a typical screen pass completed behind the line of scrimmage, it is perfectly legal for ineligible receivers to go downfield anytime after the snap. Such receivers may also legally block downfield as long as the screen pass is completed behind the line of scrimmage.

If the pass is deflected by a Team B player in or behind the neutral zone and it goes beyond the zone, there is also no foul. This exception protects the offense from an act they could not anticipate.

PLAY: A11 runs straight up the field and after the ball has left the passer's hand (a) B9 illegally blocks A11 and throws him off his pattern. The pass is completed to A10 who was clearly on the opposite side of the field.

RULING: There is no pass interference call on B9, however, a flag should have been dropped for the illegal block.

Complete a Catch

For a completed catch, one foot must be inbounds by a player who is in firm control of the ball. The one foot must physically come down in bounds. If the ball is lost after the receiver has touched the ground, due to contact or not, it should be ruled an incomplete pass instead of a fumble unless the receiver has clearly demonstrated complete control of the ball. Complete control is indicated by taking a step, tucking the ball away, or some other action ordinarily associated with running with the ball.

The fact the receiver may have a firm grasp of the ball while airborne is *not* a factor in determining whether the pass is complete. If the receiver loses control of the ball when he hits the ground there is no catch. The ground can cause an incompleteness.

A player who returns to ground inbounds without firm control must remain inbounds until he obtains secure possession of the ball.

Forward Pass -- Airborne Receiver Lands Out of Bounds

Officials do not have to judge whether the player would have returned to the ground inbounds without the opponent's contact. It is not a catch if the receiver is prevented from landing inbounds because of contact by an opponent unless he is caught and carried out of bounds, thus stopping his forward progress. (Rule 2-4-1)

PLAY: Team A has third down and seven yards to gain at Team B's 30 yard line. Player A1 leaps near the sideline to attempt to catch a pass near Team B's 30 yard line. Player A1 is (a) airborne trying to make the catch and is knocked backwards by Player B2 attempting to make the tackle and Player A1 lands outside the sideline at Team B's 32 yard line; or (b) airborne when he controls the ball attempting to complete the catch and is carried off the field by Player B2 landing out of bounds.

RULING: In (a), the pass is incomplete and the game clock should start on the snap. In (b), it is a catch and the game clock should not stop. If the game clock was stopped inadvertently by the covering official it should be immediately restarted.

Wing Officials—Dead Ball Officiating

1. 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
2. When players go into the bench area your primary responsibility is to go in after them and separate and walk them back to the field.

Officials Quiz 2019

Question 1: Immediately after A5 snaps from a scrimmage-kick formation and before A5 has a chance to look up to defend himself, B2 tries to shoot the gap between A5 and guard A6. In the process, B2 places a hand on pushes down on A5's right shoulder, causing him to fall. Do you have a roughing the snapper violation?

Question 2: Player A1 is illegally in motion at the snap. The play goes to the sideline where one of Team B's coaches makes unintentional contact with a game official. What is the ruling?

Question 3: 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. Where is the ball spotted for the next play?

Question 4: Player R33 has eye shade that covers his entire face with designs that look like members of Buck's favorite band "KISS". Is this eye shade placement legal?

Question 5: 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 6: Before the snap and with the game clock running, B79 jumps into the neutral zone and gets back without making contact. His action causes lineman A65 (lined up directly across from B79) to lift his hand from the ground, and he falls forward into the neutral zone without making contact. Do you have a false start on A65? When does the clock start?

Question 7: K1 punts the ball and R2 must race up to try and field the punt as the kick is shorter than expected. As R2 runs forward to try and reach the kick, he must go around K3 who comes within a yard of R2 but does not contact R2. How does the back judge handle this play?

Question 8: Player A24, in Team B's end zone, leaps in the air to catch a pass and contracted by B17 forcing A24 to come down inbounds on Team B's 1-yard line where he is downed. Do you have a touchdown?

Question 9: K12's kick glances the leg of K50 at the K46, is touched by R64 at the K48 and is recovered by K72 at the R49. What is the ruling?

Question 10: Quarterback A1 drops back 15 yards and throws a legal forward pass intended for A2, who is 5 yards behind the neutral zone. Before the pass reaches A2: (a) B1 tackles A2; or (b) B1 blocks A2. 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.
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Quiz Answers

Ruling 1: Legal play by B2 because he did not play directly through A5.

Ruling 2: Both fouls will be penalized, first the live-ball foul for Team A's illegal motion, then the 15 yards for unintentional contact in the restricted area. The foul is a nonplayer foul--therefore penalized as a dead-ball foul, even though the contact occurred during a live ball.

Ruling 3: NFHS, in (a) it is team R's ball on its one yard line. In (b), it's a touchback.

Ruling 4: NO. Eye shade must be a single, solid stroke with no words, numbers, logos or other symbols within the eye shade. Even if he's looking fancy and you like his style.

Ruling 5: 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 6: This is a dead-ball encroachment foul against the defense. The foul was the only reason for stopping the clock, so it will start on the ready-for-play signal. The offended team has option to start the clock on snap for an accepted penalty inside the last two minutes of either half.

Ruling 7: R2 has the right of way. If the back judge rules that K3 obstructed R2, it is a foul for kick catch interference. If the back judge rules K3 did not obstruct R2's path to the ball, no foul. It is the judgment of the official whether or not K3 affected the play by altering R2's wanted path to the ball.

Ruling 8: Touchdown, since Player A24's forward progress was stopped over Team B's end zone by B17's contact. Even though the catch was not made until A24 come down inbounds, his forward progress was stopped by B17's contact resulting in Team A's possessing the live ball in its opponent's end zone, hence, a touchdown.

Ruling 9: Although Team K was entitled to possession at the R49, first touching occurred at the K46. The ball belongs to Team R at the spot of first touching.

Ruling 10: In (a), tackling A2 is a foul, as it is a form of holding. Defensive players are prohibited from grasping an opponent other than the runner. The foul in (a) occurs during a loose-ball play, and the 10-yard penalty will be administered from the previous spot. In (b), the contact by B1 is not pass interference and, if the block itself is legal, there is no infraction. **Option Play:** The defense **MAY NOT** tackle the pitch man prior to receiving the pitch as defensive players are prohibited from grasping/hold the pitchman as he is not a runner. **The defense may block the pitchman if the block is from the front and above the waist.**