Officials are reminded that visors being worn by players during competition are legal by NFHS football rules only if they meet two criteria as detailed in Rule 1-5-3,c-4. Those two criteria are that an eye shield attached to the helmet is legal if it is:

- constructed of a molded rigid material
- is 100% clear without the presence of any tint

For those players with light sensitivity issues or otherwise, it is legal by rule for an athlete to wear sunglasses or other tinted eyewear on the face and under the face mask, either with or without a clear eye shield on his helmet.

1.5.3 SITUATION D: During the pregame visit with the head coach of Team A, the referee or another game official notices that some squad members have eye shields where are: (a) dark, or (b) clear with no tint. The head coach of Team A has a letter from a physician indicating that the dark shield is necessity for the player.

RULING: In (a), the game officials indicate to the head coach only eye shields which are clear without the presence of any tint may be worn as a physician statement cannot supersede this rule (NFHS and SDHSAA standards state no doctor’s note can make any rule legal – this clause was eliminated from NFHS rules a number of years ago!). In (b), the eye shield is legal if, in addition to being clear, it is also molded and rigid and securely attached to the helmet.

It has been brought to the attention of the SDHSAA on occasion that football officials are not enforcing the eye shield rule. Football officials need to check the players before the game for any illegal and required equipment.

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=x-0xa0fYT-Y
Equipment & Uniforms

All officials must enforce the uniform and equipment rules consistently each and every week. The football officials’ 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. Knee pads must be worn over the knees and under the pants.

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.

Bandanas, skull caps, etc., are allowed to be worn under the helmet, however no part can be exposed. Either cut the bandana "tail" off or remove completely.

If you recognize that a player is not wearing the equipment properly, and it can be fixed within before the next play without a stoppage of the play clock, address it by informing the player to correct the issue.

If players do not have the proper equipment, they cannot correct it within a reasonable time, or the players are lined up and the ball is ready to be snapped, the official should stop play and call an official’s time out. The affected player(s) is removed from the field for one play. The play clock will be reset to 25 seconds.

There is no opportunity for a team to circumvent the “player removal” requirement by calling a timeout of their own. The player must sit out one play, except for when halftime or an intermission before overtime occurs.

Free Kick Out Of Bounds

When a free kick goes out of bounds untouched by Team R, it is a foul by Team K. Team R has four choices:

1. Accept a five-yard penalty from the previous spot and have Team K rekick
2. Put the ball in play at the inbounds spot 25 yards beyond the previous spot (usually the 35-yard line)
3. Decline the penalty and put the ball in play at the inbounds spot
4. Accept a five-yard penalty from the dead-ball spot (spot where ball went out-of-bounds)

Play: Team K's free kick from it 40-yard line goes out of bounds untouched at Team R's 20 yard line.

Ruling: If Team R chooses previous spot enforcement, Team K will rekick from its own 35-yard line. Choosing to put the ball in play 25 yards beyond the previous spot would yield a new series for Team R at its own 35-yard line. Accepting a five-yard penalty enforced from the dead ball spot would result in a snap from Team R's 25-yard line.

Fouls By Team R During A Free Kick

The enforcement spot for the loose-ball fouls by Team R during a free kick is the previous spot.

Play: Team K free kicks from its own 40-yard line. Player R45 holds while the ball is in flight. Player R24 catches the ball on Team R's five yard line and returns it to Team R's 20-yard line.
Ruling: If the penalty is accepted, Team K will rekick after the 10-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot. If Team K declines, it is Team R's ball, first and 10 at Team R's 20-yard line.

The enforcement spot for fouls that occur after the kick ends when there is no subsequent loose ball (possession has been gained by Team R) is the spot of the foul or the end of the run (all-but-one) because those are fouls on running plays.

Hit Until The Whistle

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.

Officials Can Flag Personal Fouls

Coaches Can Stop The Personal Foul Action

Safety Of Players Is Of Most Importance

Mechanics/Positioning Related Items To Review

- Counts—be sure to count number of players on offense and defense every play, especially if a team is huddled after a timeout and they come directly to the line of scrimmage.
- Umpires must turn and help on catch/no catch in the middle of the field on pass plays
- Wing officials square off your spots down the sideline, do not come in at an angle for spots
- Covering down field official do not have a quick whistle on punt plays, make sure the ball is caught before sounding the whistle on fair catch plays
- Umpires—Previous Spot: Be mineful of where the ball is snapped from after returning it for the next play. Be aware of previous location.
- Back Judge—after handing ball to kicker and moving to sideline—step back to 35 yard line to make sure all players are in front of 35 yard line then move to 40 yard line to watch for possible encroachment fouls.
- Wing officials, be sure to use your signals when the ball is near the sideline. Is it in or is it out? Clock operators need to know. Your officiating partners need to know.
- Umpires, step up to the line of scrimmage on a pass under control and help rule if the quarterback was beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.
- Wings—concentrate on forward progress spots and sideline clock signals. If a player is downed in-bounds and immediately rolls out of bounds then you should have a wind
- Wings when spotting out of bounds play, turn and face the players out of bounds. Do not let players behind you without eyes on them
- All officials must have clock awareness
- Be aware of the down and distance on every play, you do not want to miss a down or give an extra down
- Linesman and Line Judge must determine if a quick pass to the sideline is forward or backward. Officials should “punch-back” a backward pass.
• Clock stoppages—officials need to stop the clock on obvious first downs and when fouls are called and the play becomes dead. Mirroring signals on clock stoppages is acceptable.
• Referee—have great penalty administration signals and great ready for play	tempo/mechanics.
• Umpire—control the middle, get the ball on a line and be precise on penalty yardage.
• Back Judge--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. If any other player kicks the ball, it is a dead ball foul for encroachment. THIS IS YOUR Call.

Thoughts To Think About From Game Observations

• Wings—Don’t ever give up the goal line. If you are responsible for the goal line—hold your position. You may have to back off for safety or perspective but never give up if there is the possibility of it coming into play.
• 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
• Umpires often have the best look on catches and traps, particularly those in the middle of the field—need to pivot after ball crosses head.
• Too many officials giving signals when it is not their call. Let the calling official make the call and cover your area of work. A second signal just complicates matters.
• There is never any hurry to signal except on a wind and kill on a first down. Slow whistle—slow flag—slow beanbag.
• Counting players—Officials need to count players every down, it matters
• We don’t ever want to toss a ball to a wing official to place the ball for a measurement. The ball should be run over to the wing official and he will place it at his feet for the measurement.
• You must see the whole play when calling an infraction. Make the fouls be solid before making a call

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
Question 1: As the umpire is making a casual inspection of the players before the game, he notices that several team A players have painted their faces with makeup. Is the paint legal?

Question 2: First and 10 from team A’s 30 yard line. A1 throws a backward pass to halfback A2. The ball bounces off A2’s helmet, hits the ground at team A’s 32 yard line and rolls to a stop. Since the ball hit the ground beyond the line of scrimmage, is that an incomplete forward pass?

Question 3: Fourth and 10 on Team K’s 35 yard line. R1 blocks K2’s punt behind the line, and the ball rolls to team K’s 30 yard line. K3 picks up the loose ball and runs for an apparent touchdown. Is K3’s advance legal?

Question 4: First and 10 for Team A from its own 20 yard line. A1, wearing number 77, lines up in the offensive backfield. He catches a legal forward pass and advances to team A’s 27 yard line, where he is downed. Team B’s coach requests a timeout to ask why A1 was not penalized. Discussion reveals that the covering official saw the ineligible catch the ball but failed to react to it. Because the official agrees with the coach, can Team A still be penalized?

Question 5: Team A has the ball, second and five from its own 25 yard line. A1 runs to his 40 yard line, where he hands the ball forward to A2. A2 gains five yards before he is tackled. How is the play handled?

Question 6: Team A, which is out of timeouts and trails by five points, has second and goal from Team B’s eight yard line. The clock is running. With seven seconds left in the game, B1 is flagged for encroachment. What is the enforcement?

Question 7: First and 10 for Team A from its own 20 yard line. Guard A1 is flagged for blocking below the waist. A2’s pass is intercepted at Team A’s 35 yard line by B3, who returns it for a touchdown. Can the penalty be enforced on the try or on the succeeding kickoff?

Question 8: A8 jumps in the middle of the end zone, grabs a pass while in the air and, before alighting, has the ball knocked out of his hands by a defender. While in the air, the receiver has control of the ball. Is that a touchdown or an incomplete pass?

Question 9: Second and 10 for Team A from Team B’s 16 yard line. A1’s legal forward pass is incomplete. After the ball is dead, B2 is flagged for (a) taunting A1, or (b) knocking A1 to the ground. What is the enforcement?

Question 10: When regulation time ended, Team A had all three of its second-half timeouts remaining and used none in the first overtime. How many timeouts does Team A have at its disposal for the second overtime?

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.
Ruling 1: The markings are illegal. Face marking is restricted to eye shade that is a single solid stroke.

Ruling 2: That is a backward pass that turned into a muff. The ball remains live. The initial direction of A1’s pass was backward; the ball retains that status until it is either caught or recovered. By definition the ball was muffed. Either Team A or Team B could recover and advance the ball.

Ruling 3: Yes. Team K has scored a touchdown. With the exception of a kick try, any member of the kicking team may catch or recover and advance a scrimmage kick while it is in or behind the neutral zone if the kick has not crossed the neutral zone.

Ruling 4: The coach followed the proper procedure. The officials’ error represents a misapplication of the rule that bars ineligibles from touching a pass. The timeout should be changed to an official’s timeout and Team A should be penalized for A1’s foul.

Ruling 5: Forward handing beyond the line is a live-ball foul. The five-yard penalty includes a loss of down and is enforced from the spot of the foul. Since Team A is still beyond the line to gain after enforcement, the first down is awarded. The loss of down aspect of the penalty is not an issue. It will be Team A’s ball, first and 10 from its own 35 yard line.

Ruling 6: Team A has the option of having the clock start on the ready after the penalty is enforced.

Ruling 7: The penalty will be declined. Because the foul occurred before the change of possession, Team B does not have the option of succeeding spot enforcement. Team B will attempt the try from team A’s three yard line.

Ruling 8: That is an incomplete pass. To complete a catch, an airborne player must first touch the ground inbounds. If control of the ball is lost prior to or simultaneous with returning to the ground, it is an incomplete pass.

Ruling 9: Team B is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct in (a) and a personal foul in (b). Both are enforced half the distance from the previous spot. Neither penalty includes the award of a first down; it will be third and two for Team A from Team B’s eight yard line.

Ruling 10: Team A has one timeout. Unused first-half timeouts do not carry over to the second half or overtime, nor do unused second-half timeouts carry over to overtime. Timeouts do not carry over from one overtime period to the next.

Umpires – Be Active, Get The Ball Down And Be Precise With Penalty Administration

You must see the whole play when calling an infraction. Make the fouls be solid before making a call