

Definitions and Officiating Philosophies

Aiding the Runner:

- A foul only if the runner is “picked up” by teammates or if he is “pulled” into end zone by a teammate.
- It is not a foul if “driven” into the end zone or forward by his teammates.

Announcements:

- Practice your microphone skills. The fans love this part of the game.
- Practice even when you do not have a microphone.

Backward Pass:

- When in question the pass is forward not backward.
- When the QB’s hand starts forward rule the pass forward even if he is contacted and the ball goes backward.
- To be a backward pass the spot where the ball is first touched or hits the ground must be behind the spot where the ball was released.

Bean Bags:

- Fumbles: Officials shall drop the bean bag only when they see the ball fumbled not when they see the ball loose.
- Punts: Officials shall drop the bean at the spot the kick ends or the spot of illegal touching.
- Be accurate. You are marking a spot.

Blocking:

- If there is a potential OH but the action occurs clearly away from the POA and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, OH should not be called.
- Blocking below the waist. When in question the block is below the waist.
- It is not blocking below the waist if the initial contact is above the waist and the blocker then slides down and makes contact below the waist.
- To be a foul for IBB the initial contact of the block must be from behind and above the waist. When in question the block is below the waist.
- It is not a foul for IBB if the initial contact is from the side.
- If the blocker is in a CHASE MODE ALL of the contact must be on the side.
- You should not call OH on a double team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back.
- A block from behind below the knee is a CLP. Clipping is legal if within the Tackle Box and above the knee.
- If a defender has beaten the blocker be alert for OH. If he is beat he is going to cheat. Watch the feet.

Ball Persons:

- Have good communication and a good pregame meeting.
- Keep them in the game. Keep them off of the field.
- Tell them you will let them know when you want a new ball. Don't let them make that decision.

Clocks:

- Game Clock: The Referee may make any clock adjustments necessary.
- Game Clock: When a T. O. is called, if an official sees time remaining on the Game Clock, put time back on even if reads 0:00 when the officials get the game stopped for the T. O.
- Play Clock: Once the play clock reads : 00 the official will look for the ball. If the ball is still on the ground and not in the process of being snapped it is a foul for DOG. If the ball is being snapped no foul for DOG.
- Play Clock: The Referee may reset the play clock to: 25 if necessary.
- If the clock operators do not come to the dressing room prior to the game report it to the Athletic Director. If they are TASO Officials report it to the Chapter.
- If time is being kept on the field turn the scoreboard clock off.
- Know the signals used if the 0:25 play clocks are not working. Turn both off if one is not working.
- Be sure the crew has a watch to time if necessary.

Coach to Coach Communication System:

- This is not covered by the rules and the officials are not involved.
- If one team's communication goes down, the officials may notify the other Coach, but there is no rule of equity and no obligation for them to put theirs down unless there is a district rule.

Coin Toss:

- Make this a memorable experience for the captains and their families.
- Make the captain call the toss before you toss the coin. Repeat his choice back to him.
- Let it hit the ground. Give good signals to the Press Box.

Consistency:

- Coaches want consistency in what is and is not a foul so they know what to coach.
- Do not call a foul in the 4thQ that you passed on earlier in the game.
- Do not pass on a call in the 4thQ that you called earlier in the game.
- Do not call a foul near the goal line that you passed on near midfield.
- Do not pass on a call near the goal line that you called near midfield.
- Be consistent in marking the ball ready for play throughout the game.

Defenseless Players:

- The following players are considered defenseless and the defense may not hit them late or with their helmet or forearm in the head or neck area. Until a defenseless player who has caught a pass or kick is able to perform a second act after possession such as pitch it, pass it, advance it, or is able to protect himself he remains defenseless.
- QB in the act of passing the ball
- Receiver in the act of catching a pass.
- Receiver in the act of catching a kick.
- Runner whose forward progress has been stopped and is being held up by the defense
- Player on the ground at the end of the play.
- Punter in the act of punting the ball.
- Kicker in the act of kicking the ball.
- A player participating in the game without a helmet.
- There is not a foul for helmet to helmet against the runner unless there is a launch or targeting.
- Launching is when a player springs forward and upward and both feet come off of the ground prior to contact.

End of Game:

- If an offensive team goes into a victory formation officials should use common sense officiating and make every attempt to not call fouls that have no bearing on the outcome of the game.
- Personal Fouls and Player Safety Fouls should always be called regardless of time and score.
- If the Referee stops play for any reason the game is suspended and not over.
- The official's jurisdiction ends when the game is over.

Equipment:

- Both teams must certify in writing before the game that all of their players are equipped according to rule and have been instructed the proper use of their equipment.
- If equipment becomes illegal through play the team will not be charged a T.O., but the player must leave the game until the illegal equipment is corrected.

Face Mask:

- Touching the Face Mask or a grab and release is not a foul. There must be a pull or twist and turn to be a foul.
- The grab, pull, twist and turn of any helmet opening is a foul.
- Face Mask restrictions apply to the offense and defense.

False Start:

- A flinch is a flinch and a FST. Lineman and Backs.
- If an ineligible offensive player is going from a 2 point stance to a 3 point stance when the ball is snapped this is a FST.
- If an eligible offensive player is going from a 2 point stance to a 3 point stance when the ball is snapped is ILM.
- QB head bobs or jerks are FST. QB hard counts are not fouls.
- Ineligible offensive lineman who have their hand on or near the ground can turn and look at the QB to hear the signals if they are slow and do not lift their hand.
- Pointing at the defender as part of the offensive signals is not a FST.
- If the center flinches, head bobs, or moves the ball this is a FST. Especially if this is only done on 4th downs or short yardage situations.
- Be alert for the defense calling the offensive snap count that causes a FST.

Field:

- If both teams are on the field an official must be on the field to keep the teams separated. Jurisdiction is 30 minutes prior to KO but use good judgment if there is a potential for problems.
- The Referee will request a change to anything in, on, or around the field he believes is unsafe.

Flags:

- There is no such thing as a “late flag”. Sometimes it is necessary to wait until all of the action has stopped to make a ruling.
- There is no such thing as “that’s not your call “. All officials are responsible for their primary area and secondarily responsible for ruling on action legal or illegal anywhere on the field.
- Do not throw flags at players. Throw them up in the air unless it is a spot foul.

Fighting:

- If player actions are deemed to be “fighting” the player must be DQ.
- When in question such actions will be deemed pushing and not fighting.

Formations Defense:

- If the center adjusts or moves the ball forward after the defense has established position on the LOS, the defense should not be penalized for DOF as they have been put into this position by actions of the offense.
- A defender is considered on the LOS if any part of his body is inside the rearmost part of a down lineman’s body.

Formations Offensive:

- Officials will work to keep offensive lineman legal and call ILF only when obvious or when warnings to the Player or Coach are ignored.
- Do not wait until the 4th quarter to start enforcing this rule.
- A wide receiver or slot back is covering up a tight end if there is no stagger. When in question it is not a foul.
- Do not be technical in determining if a wide receiver or slot back is on or off the LOS. When in question it is not a foul.

Free Kicks:

- The kicking team restraining line for regular deep or pooch kicks will be a SOFT plane and the officials will not be technical on calling OFK.
- The kicking teams restraining line for an onside kick will be a HARD plane and the officials will call OFK if the kickers (other than the kicker) break the plane of the kicking teams restraining line before the ball is kicked.
- The receiving team restraining line is a plane and a kickoff has gone 10 yards when the kick has broken the plane of the receiving teams restraining line.
- If the kickoff results in a TB or Fair Catch do not call a foul for an illegal wedge formation or OH.

Fumbles:

- When in question, the runner fumbled the ball and was not down.
- When in question, the ball is passed and not fumbled during an attempted forward pass.
- The ground cannot cause a fumble. If the runner with the ball in his possession, contacts the ground with something other than his hand or foot and the ball comes out simultaneous with the contact the ball becomes dead. You cannot fumble a dead ball.

Fouls:

- See the play, read the play, make the call. Go slow in calling fouls.
- If you think it's a foul it is not. If you know it's a foul it is.
- If you don't see the entire play don't throw a flag.

Game Balls:

- There is no such thing as a kicking ball. All balls submitted for approval prior to the game must be rotated in and out of the game as necessary.
- A new ball should be brought into the game only when requested by the officials.
- When the U places the ball on the ground he has deemed the ball acceptable for play.
- Do not let a team request a new ball late in the :25 count to keep from getting a DOG
- Good crew ball mechanics is a very important part of the game.

Game Control:

- Control of the game is not lost in one play. It happens a play at a time until control is lost.
- Preventative officiating will keep the game pace and eliminate potential fouls.
- “Let them play” does not mean let them foul.
- Fouls that create an unfair advantage or player safety should be called anytime during the game regardless of time and score.

Goal Line:

- When in question it is not a Touchdown.
- When considering whether or not a receiver has taken the ball out of the end zone on a kick, interception, or recovery, it is the position of the ball rather than the position of the player or his feet that will determine if the entire ball is out of the end zone.
- The entire ball must be in the FOP or it is a touchback or safety.
- The entire Goal Line is in the end zone.
- When in question a foul occurred in the FOB and not in the end zone
- Consider an interception or catching a kick inside the 1 yard line to be in the end zone.

Hide Out & Trick Plays:

- Formations and actions during the execution of a trick or unusual plays must be completely legal.
- Any play that uses a substitution to deceive as part of the play is illegal.
- If a play can only be run in front of a team’s bench area it is probably illegal.
- Officials must be aware of all substitutions, especially ones that could create an ILS foul.
- A player may fake a spike and throw a pass.
- A player may not fake “taking a knee”. This makes the ball dead.

Holding Defense:

- It is not DH if the defender is restricting the offensive player in a personal attempt to get to the ball or the runner.
- A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts and takes away his feet is DH.
- Do not call DH if the action occurs clearly away from the POA and has no effect on the play.
- If a defender holds and restricts an offensive player and a teammate shoots the gap this is DH
- If the defender holds and restricts an offensive player and no one shoots the gap this is not DH unless this action prevents the offensive player from getting to their blocking assignment.

Holding Offensive:

- To have OH there must be a clear and visible material restriction: a pull, a yank, or a jerk.
- Make the defense "show you something" Like trying to get away.
- Categories of OH: Tackle, Pullover, Grab & Restrict, Hook & Restrict, Take Down, Jerk & Restrict.

Horse Collar Tackle:

- To have a Horse Collar Tackle the runner does not have to be tackled. If the immediate action buckles the runners knees but he is strong enough to fight through the action it is still a foul.
- It is not a foul for a Horse Collar Tackle inside the tackle box.

Illegal Forward Pass:

- The second forward pass from behind the LOS is IFP.
- If beyond the LOS the spot from where the ball was first touched or hits the ground must be in advance of the spot where the ball was released to be IFP.
- For the QB to be called for IFP the QB's ENTIRE BODY and the BALL must be beyond the LOS when he RELEASES the ball.

Ineligible Downfield:

- For a restricted offensive player to be illegally downfield on a forward pass that crosses the LOS the ENTIRE player's body must have been more than 3 yards past the LOS before pass is RELEASED to have a foul for IDP.
- If the QB is throwing the ball away do not call IDP.

Intentional Grounding:

- The QB can throw the ball anywhere if he is not under pressure. Exception: Cannot spike the ball to stop the clock unless it is immediately after the snap.
- The QB can throw the ball at the feet of an eligible receiver even if he is not looking.
- If the QB is outside the pocket and throws the ball away to avoid a sack and there is a question as to if the ball went beyond the LOS rule that it did.

Kicking a Loose Ball:

- When in question, if a loose ball was kicked, it will be ruled accidental and not a foul.

Leaping:

- Jumping straight up to block a Try or FG is not a foul. Landing on a player is the foul.
- Know who on the defense is in a restricted leaping position.
- It is a foul to leap over a blocker behind the NZ when attempting to block a kick.

Line of Scrimmage:

- The neutral zone is the entire width of the football. No one is allowed in the NZ except the snapper.
- Defensive players who jump into the NZ and are moving back will be ruled to be DOF anytime there is a question as to did they get back before the snap.
- Any forward movement by the defense puts them into the neutral zone.
- 2 Offensive Players Protected: If a defender moves into the NZ in the gap between 2 offensive linemen causing one of the linemen to react it is a foul for DOF.
- 3 Offensive Players Protected: If a defender moves into the NZ head up on an offensive lineman causing that lineman or an adjacent lineman on either side to react it is a foul for DOF.
- Backs and Split Receivers are not protected.
- The defender must be in the NZ when the offensive moves for this to be DOF.
- If the offense moves and the defender was not in the NZ this is a FST.
- Contact by the defense prior to the snap is DOF.
- The defense cannot touch the ball after it has been made ready for play.
- Rule a defender as “unabated” when his charge takes him past the hip of the offensive tackle.

Measurements:

- Always allow a reasonable request for a measurement.
- Do not allow a team a measurement to keep from a DOG penalty.
- Do not allow a measurement after a touchback. The ball must touch the 30 yard line to be a first down.
- Do not allow a measurement after a kickoff OB that was spotted 30 yards from the kickoff spot. The ball must touch the 40 yard line to be a first down if KO was from 40.
- Be sure the Press Box or TV cameras have a clear view of the measurement.
- Rotate the ball with the nose facing the goal line before measuring.
- Don't move the ball then measure.
- Hold the ball to keep it from moving prior to the measurement.

Momentum:

- If a pass is intercepted near the goal line (inside the 1 yard line) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the FOP or the EZ, make it a TB.
- If intercepted inside the 5 yard line and the players momentum take him into the EZ where he goes down, give him the ball at the spot of the interception.
- Use the same philosophy in ruling if the catcher of a free or scrimmage kick should be a TB or possession in the FOP.

Out of Bounds:

- If you think a runner stepped OB he did not.

Overtime:

- You must know the Overtime Rules and if the District plays Positive Points.

Pass Interference Defense:

- There must be contact to have DPI and the pass must be untouched and catchable.
- There is no face guarding rule.
- Both offensive and defense have equal rights to the ball.
- Most DPI fouls will fall into these categories:
 - Not playing the ball
 - Playing through the back of the receiver.
 - Grabbing the receivers arm.
 - Arm Bar to slow receiver down.
 - Cutoff the receiver's route.
- Hook & Turn. Must turn before ball gets there. Hand on back or waist is not a foul without the turn
- DPI is not coached.

Pass Interference Offense:

- Blocking downfield on a pass that crosses the LOS.
- Push off creating separation
- Pick plays.
- Must be more than 1 yard beyond the LOS
- Do not call OPI or IDP if an attempted screen pass is overthrown and lands beyond the LOS.
- OPI is coached.

Personal Fouls:

- Spitting on an opponent is a DQ.
- When late hits occur away from the ball near the end of the play, when in question make them dead ball PF not live ball.
- Flagrant PF is a DQ.
- Contact fouls are UNR. Non-contact fouls are UNS.

Pocket:

- Pocket is not an NCAA Rule Book term. The rule book uses the term Tackle Box.
- The pocket (tackle box) goes from tackle to tackle all the way back to the passers end line.
- The pocket (tackle box) goes away when the ball leaves the pocket and does not come back even if the ball comes back into the original pocket area.

Pregame

- A good pregame conference is vital to the success of the crew.
- Use the time on the field during warm ups to get some snaps and reps at your position.

Professionalism:

- From the time you arrive at the stadium until you leave, how you dress, act, talk, and treat other people is a reflection on you, your fellow officials, and your Chapter.

Pylon:

- The pylon is OB behind the goal line.
- If the ball in player possession touches the pylon it is a TD.
- A player who touches the pylon is OB

Roughing/Running into Holder, Kicker, and Passer:

- The holder can be roughed. Be careful in calling running into the holder. Remember he can get up and run. If contact is very late it is RTH.
- When in question it is RTK. If the defender hits the kicker's plant leg it is RTK. If he hits his kicking leg it can be either RTK or RNK.
- When in question it is RPS if the defender is attempting to punish.
- RPS can be the result of a legal hit that was late.

Safety:

- The ball can be punted on a Safety Kickoff.

Sideline:

- Use common sense in working with the team on your sideline to stay back.
- Let them coach but don't let them interfere with you doing your job.
- Sideline control is a safety issue.
- Good communication with your sideline is an important part of the game.
- Be respectful and reply to questions. Do not reply to comments.
- Conduct sideline conferences with the Coach on the sideline. Not on the field.

Signals:

- The dead ball signal kills the play just like a whistle.
- Good signals by the officials make the game play better.
- Do not signal TD unless you are the covering official. Don't repeat another official's TD signal.

Spots:

- Always mark the forward progress spot with your downfield foot.
- Spot the ball with the same pace throughout the game.
- The ball should be spotted where it was when it became dead not where it became dead.
- The wrist is part of the hand and the ankle is part of the foot. Rule a player down when something other than his hand or foot touches the ground.
- The back of the hand does not make the runner down.
- HL, LJ practice cross field mechanics.
- Know when you see a double action. Don't give the runner too much progress.

Touchdown:

- If the ball in player possession breaks the plane of the goal line it is a TD and the ball becomes dead. Go slow in ruling TD. Look at the other officials if you need help before you signal.
- Your TD signal kills the play and the ball becomes dead.

Touching the Ball:

If a player who is passive and not blocking is blocked into the ball he is not deemed to have touched the ball.

- If a player who is active and blocking touches the ball it is touching.
- On a punt when in question the ball was not touched by kickers or receivers.

Trys & Field Goals:

- The 4th down fumble rule applies on try's.
- A kick that hits the cross bar or upright can score a goal, otherwise it is a dead ball.
- A pass, free kick, punt, or fumble that hits the goal post is dead.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct:

- Allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of plays.
- Do not allow prolonged actions or taunting actions made toward an opponent.
- Actions such as throat slash, gun references, sexual motions, spiking the ball, or actions that are aimed to draw attention are UNS fouls.
- Kicking or throwing an officials flag is a DQ.
- A player will be DQ if he commits 2 UNS during the game.
- A player disqualifies himself. We only enforce the rule.

Video:

- Watch and study as much video of yourself and others as possible.

Weather:

- Know the weather and lightning rules for stopping and restarting the game.

Whistles:

- On some plays there may not be a whistle.
- Officials are instructed to blow the whistle only when they see the ball dead in player possession.
- It does not matter what type of whistle you use or if you have it in your mouth or not during the play.
- What matters is why and when you blow the whistle.
- There will be no inadvertent whistles if the officials go slow and blow the ball dead only when it becomes dead by rule.

X's & O's

- Learn some football coaching terms.
- This will help when communicating with coaches.

Yard Lines:

- The ball can be spotted on a yard line to begin a new series after a COP.
- At all other times the ball will be spotted where it becomes dead.

Zones:

- Know your zones.
- Tackle Box
- Legal Clipping Zone
- Legal Crackback blocking Zone
- Neutral Zone
- Side Zone
- Outside/ Inside numbers.
- Free kick blocking zone