

2016 Pre-Season Bulletin 1

Again this year, weekly bulletins will highlight rules and mechanics issues that come to my attention. Please contact me with any unusual play situations that I can share with officials and associations across the State. I am also looking for video clips of Oregon play situations that I can incorporate into this year's bulletins.

Fitness and Appearance

Football officiating is about fitness and appearance, position and movement, judgment, game control and poise, communication skills and relationships. It is also a vigorous avocation that demands an official be in excellent physical condition, able to give the very best, on every play, in every contest.

Pre-season preparation applies to both mental and physical fitness. It is easier to maintain a level of fitness instead of getting in shape, falling out of shape and getting back into shape over and over again. **You cannot officiate yourself into shape.**

Physical fitness is an important item to remember. When we are tired physically, mental alertness declines as well. Fitness plays an important role in officiating and we should not allow our bodies to decline during the off season. You are in control of your own body. Be sure that you are physically fit for the upcoming season.

Check Your Equipment

Pre-season preparation includes updating one's uniform if necessary. Don't compromise your professionalism and the reputation of your association by attempting to make that shirt and pants last another year. Game control starts with your appearance and the professionalism that goes with it.

Take the time to review your uniform so that you present a clean, crisp, neat look. As we all know, "you never get a second chance to make a first impression." Many officials work more than one game per week and may need to have multiple uniforms available.

It is also important to review your other officiating equipment, shoes, socks, flags, whistles, bean bags, undergarments and other officiating supplies that make your uniform complete.

Be fit, be neat, be sharp.

What Are You Doing to Make Yourself Better

- Watch other officials work and learn from them.
- Learning is an on-going process; you can never stop learning.
- Dedicate yourself to becoming a better official – be coachable.
- You become better by understanding your mistakes and working to correct them. What are you going to work on this season to get better?

Learn the Rules and Mechanics

You need to learn the rules, not just read the rules. Knowing the rules instills confidence in your officiating. You may have got the play right, but explain to yourself why the rule is that way or why you are sure you got it right.

Know the mechanics! There is no excuse for being out of position on the field. It's not enough to know where you should be positioned; you must know why you are there and what to look for. If you are in the right position to make the call, coaches will be less likely to question your judgment.

Taking Care of Business

Pay special attention to your loved ones. They sacrifice a lot to enable you to do what you do. During the season, make sure your commitments to your officiating are compatible with your responsibilities at work and at home. Your job is what pays the bills; don't take chances with your livelihood.

Confirm all your dates, times, sites with your crewmates. Be sure you have your cell phone with you when you travel and carry important phone numbers with you.

Practice in Front of a Mirror

Signals.....Facial Expressions..... Voice and Articulation. More schools are having the Referee use a microphone. Pre-season practice will make this a more comfortable experience.

Practice **what** you are going to say to coaches and players in difficult situations and **how** you are going to say it.

Learn **how** to deliver the message, especially when coaches won't like what you have to say.

Be aware of the messages you send out to others. **Bad body language will silence good work.**

Penalty Enforcement

Play: Team A rushes to the line after making a first down. The down box and chains are set, but the center snaps the ball prior to the ready-for-play. Team A is flagged for delay of game. QB A12 then spikes the ball in disgust which hits the Referee who flags A12 for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

Ruling: It will be A's ball, 1st and 10, twenty yards behind where the first down was made. Fouls committed **before** the ready-for-play shall be administered **before** the line-to-gain is established. In this play, the box and chains are moved back 20 yards and re-set creating a new line-to-gain. Rule 5-3-1.

And Finally.....

I'm looking forward to another great season as your State Rules Interpreter. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you or help out your association in any way.