

2016 Regular Season Bulletin 5

Fan Interference

Play: Following a touchdown, 10-15 non-players of the visiting team leave the team box area and swarm into the end zone to congratulate the player who scored the TD. A flag is thrown and one 15-yard penalty for Unsportsmanlike Conduct is charged to the Head Coach.

So far, so good, but it gets better!

Later in the game, a fan runs onto the field from the visiting side and begins to berate an official. A flag is thrown, game management intervenes and the fan is removed from the field.

Question: Is this a foul, and if so, do you charge it to the visiting team's Head Coach which would result in his disqualification for a second Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul?

Ruling: Fan interference is not covered by NFHS rules. Let game management and security personnel handle the situation, pick up the flag and resume the game. Report the incident to your Commissioner and complete an OAOA Incident Report to trigger follow-up by the OSAA.

Coaches

Coaches are in mid-season form. Please be aware of bogus arguments. One coach argued that all Blindside Blocks are illegal because of the safety factor and it didn't matter if open hands were used. Another coach argued that the result of the play was a TD when an inadvertent whistle was blown near the line of scrimmage.

Extending the Period – The Philosophy Behind

I haven't spent a lot of Bulletin time discussing officiating philosophies, but as a result of a controversial ending to a recent college game where a period was erroneously extended, the NCAA published their philosophy regarding extending a period. Since NFHS rules also allow for a period to be extended under some circumstances, I'm sharing part of that philosophy to help officials better understand why that provision exists in the NFHS Rules Book.

"When the down is going to be repeated, that really means that it has not yet been resolved. Put another way, there is some unfinished business to take care of before the period is over. And the "do-over" of that last play is what is required to wrap up that period, to bring it to a close. So we say that we extend the period---and we do that to take care of that unfinished business: the down that needs to be repeated. Given that philosophy, it should be easy to see why the period is not extended when there is an offensive foul whose penalty calls for loss of down.

Remember that "loss of down" is shorthand for "loss of the right to repeat the down." So with regard to extending the period, since there will be no repeat of the down, then the business of the period has been taken care of; hence there is no reason to extend the period--it is truly over, there is no unfinished business, and we move on to the next period. Of course, if this takes place in the second or fourth period, the half is over."

Cancer Awareness Month

Solid-colored pink towels, gloves, socks, shoe laces and sweatbands (worn legally) are legal commemorative items that may be worn in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness.

Roughing the Punter

Play: As a result of a bad snap, a would-be punter scrambles, picks up the ball and kicks the ball an instant before he is contacted by the defense. Is this a foul for roughing the kicker?

Ruling: Look at the Comment to Case Book play 9.4.5 Sit. B. The threshold question is whether or not contact could be avoided. If contact could have been avoided, but wasn't, and there was contact, then you have a flag. If the contact was unavoidable and it was not certain that the kick would be made, then the contact is ignored and there is no flag, i.e. the defense is given more lee-way when the issue of contact avoidance kicks in.

Remember, by rule, a would-be punter is a runner until he/she meets certain criteria outlined in Rule 2-32-8. When those conditions are met, then the player's status changes to that of a kicker and additional protection applies. This is the same issue that we face with rugby-style kickers who run around before kicking the ball. There's often a very fine time line between a player becoming a kicker and when he's contacted by the defense. That said, there's always the option of a personal foul for unnecessary roughness. Same penalty minus the automatic 1st down.

As always, when in question, think about player safety and throw the flag.

Training Video

This week's training video features four plays.

Clip 1 shows two low blocks. First, at Team K's 33 yard line by the player "protecting" the punter, and second, at Team R's 30 yard line during the run back. The second block is so sloppy it's hard to label as a block, but still the contact is low.

Clip 2 is a possible blindside block at the 48 yard line. Cannot see if the player leads with open hands, but our philosophy is when in question, it's a foul.

Clip 3 shows possible helmet-to-helmet contact, but the contact is with the right forearm in a striking manner and that's a personal foul. The same player also gets in a shove to the QB after the tackle which could have also been penalized as a dead ball unsportsmanlike conduct foul.

Clip 4 another possible helmet to helmet contact against the QB. Close call as the QB is in the process of being tackled when the second defender comes in. Even with freeze-frame, the tackler's head blocks a clean view of the 2nd player, but it looks like he lowers his head and makes contact with the QB. Again, the philosophy is when in question, it's a foul.

Here's the link: <http://osafootball.arbitersports.com/Front/105991/Video/player/13818/16735>

Remember that you need to be signed in to the Central Hub to view these plays.