

## **2018 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 always 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

For 2018, there are rule changes and points of emphasis that deal with player equipment and penalty enforcement. Please start studying the Rules Book and Case Book. 17-20 schools in Oregon will start playing 6-player football with rule modifications that have been sent to all officials. There are also new rules that effect free and scrimmage kicks for sub-varsity contests. Make sure you are familiar with all the new material for 2018.

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 you need to be able to explain to yourself why the rule is what it is 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 less likely 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.**

## Jamborees, Scrimmages, Camps and Clinics

Please offer to work as many jamborees and scrimmages as your schedule allows. This is a great way to get ready for the upcoming season. If you are a veteran official, help mentor a less experienced official who is starting to learn the tricks of the trade. Newer officials, find a veteran, ask questions, be a sponge, soak up as much information as you can.

## 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 your association.