

DEAR FOOTBALL COACHES & OFFICIALS,

OCTOBER 18, 2007

To this point, I commend the coaches and staff on behavior. I have had numerous reports of outstanding sportsmanship shown by players, coaches and fans. Please continue to take a few moments with your players and staff to discuss good sportsmanship. Players need to understand the penalty involved if they are ejected from a contest, plus the negative effect it puts on your school and program.

****FOOTBALL COACHES OF SCHOOLS NOT MAKING 2007 PLAYOFFS****

COACHES, the IHSAA would like to invite you and your football team to attend the 2007 Football Championship Games at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls, on Friday, November 16 and Saturday, November 17, 2007. The schedule is as follows:

Friday, November 16

8 Player - 9:00 a.m.
Class A - 12:30 p.m.
Class 1A - 3:30 p.m.
Class 4A - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 17

Class 2A - 9:30 a.m.
Class 3A - 12:30 p.m.

With paid admission by your coaches and players, and if we receive notification by Monday, November 12, 10:00 a.m. that your squad will be attending the 2007 football championship games, the IHSAA would like to recognize you by announcing your head coach, team name, and having the entire squad stand up and be recognized, AND if you make it available to us, showing your school mascot on the video board in the UNI-Dome. This recognition will take place during the championship game of your respective classification.

OFFICIALS

SPORTSMANSHIP RATINGS. By now, you should be submitting your varsity football ratings online on a weekly basis. **The deadline to have all of your ratings submitted online is November 26, 2007.** Do not wait until November 26 to submit all of your ratings for the season all at once! The IHSAA wishes to have each official submit ratings on a game-by-game basis, to be able to track how schools are doing each week. Please include any playoff games you work in your ratings! Remember, ratings are for the **VARSIITY** level only. Your username and password have been sent to you in previous football mailings.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION FOR SPRING OF 2008. Remember, we always mail re-registration information out in mid-March. If you only work football, please make sure you register on time, before May 1. **Do not wait until football season begins to register!** Our plan for this next spring registration period is to have officials register online. You will receive information regarding this sometime in mid-March, so please be on the lookout and be sure you read this information and take care of your registration before the May 1 deadline.

COIN FLIP. Be sure if you have a 7:10 coin flip, off the field of play, there must also be a mock flip at approximately 7:27.

COACHES

ALL TIME BEST LIST & QUIKSTATS. Bud Legg needs from each coach any game, season or career performance that qualifies for our All-Time Best List, which is on our web site. Email Bud with information: blegg@iahsaa.org. We also encourage ALL schools to enter their final stats on quikstatsiowa.com. The IHSAA expects schools to use the site on a weekly basis.

COACHES & OFFICIALS

AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES. Authorized conferences may be held on the team sidelines up to 9 yards in 11-player and 7 yards in 8-player football in front of your team box sidelines or on the field in between the inbounds lines. If you hold an authorized conference on the field, between the inbounds lines, you may only have 11 players (coach may wear a heat set) and up to 3 trainers. If the conference is held on the sidelines, all players and coaches may be present. Players will be allowed to be in uniform and wear a head set, but must stay in the stated area. Coaches will be permitted to wear headsets and be involved in the conference. **OFFICIALS**, make sure you are within close

proximity of one of the two conferences taking place in order to monitor (11 players between the inbounds lines) and advise the head coach, **THE BALL WILL BE MARKED READY FOR PLAY IN 15 SECONDS.**

COACHING BOX RULE. There have been a few reports of coaches or officials not wanting to adhere or enforce our coaching box rule. If this involves you as a coach or your crew, **PLEASE** make the necessary changes.

COACHES & OFFICIALS. I think we need to go back to the drawing board especially dealing west coast offenses and hurry-up offenses, regarding the 9-yard mark in 11-player football and the 7-yard mark in 8-player football.

FORMATION: Restrictions on Team A at the time the ball is snapped govern location of players, formations and motion.

To prevent hide-out plays, the rules (7-2-1) require all team A players to be between the nine yard marks (7-yard mark in 8-player) sometime after the ball is declared ready-for-play and before the snap.

This rule is intended to prevent a team A substitute from slipping onto the field and setting up near his sideline just before the snap. It is also intended to allow defensive players the opportunity during no huddle downs to recognize who is participating on the next play. One must remember if the referee blows the whistle marking the ball ready-for-play and a team A player is outside the 9 (11-player) or 7 (8-player) yard mark, but goes in motion and is inside the 9 or 7 yard mark when the ball is snapped, he has met the requirement.

EXAMPLE: With less than 2 minutes remaining in the first half, team A is in a hurry-up offense. End A89 runs a psss pattern and an incomplete or complete pass is thrown. Team A runs a no-huddle offense the following down and A89 is 5 yards from the sidelines and on the field of play when the next snap takes place. The player A89 who was 5 yards from the sidelines never entered the 7 or 9 yard marks from the time the ball was marked ready-for-play and before the snap took place, is considered to be in illegal formation. **RULING:** Foul on A89 for an illegal formation; a 5-yard penalty from the previous spot. In order for A89 to be in legal formation, he would need to be inside the 9 or 7 yard marks sometime from the time the ball was marked ready-for-play and before the ball is snapped.

POINTS OF INFORMATION

PASS INTERFERENCE. “No player of A or B shall interfere beyond the neutral zone during a legal forward-pass play.” This restriction applies only if the forward pass crosses the neutral zone. There can be no pass interference if the pass does not cross the neutral zone. Contact behind the neutral zone, even though the pass does cross the neutral zone, is not pass interference. While a forward pass is in flight, no player of A or B may interfere beyond the neutral zone with an opponent’s opportunity to catch the pass. The prohibition for the offense applies from the time of the snap to the time the pass is touched. For the defense, the prohibition begins at the time the ball leaves the passer’s hand and extends to the time the pass is touched. Remember if contact by B is away from the direction of the pass, it is not forward pass interference.

During a down in which a forward pass is thrown, certain acts by each team are permitted while others are prohibited. These will vary between the snap and the time the pass is in flight. Because the team with the ball knows the snap signal and the type of play, restrictions on the offense begin with the snap and continue until the pass is touched. During this interval, any acts by the offensive team players beyond the neutral zone which interfere with the defender’s opportunity to move toward, bat or catch a pass, constitute interference. Ineligibles must remain in or behind the neutral zone, that is, in the expanded neutral zone if blocking a defensive lineman and maintaining contact, until the pass is in flight. While the pass is in flight, contact restrictions apply to them also. It is interference if an offensive player blocks a defender beyond the neutral zone and the pass thereafter crosses the neutral zone. All defensive players are eligible receivers and, therefore, except on their line of scrimmage, must be given the opportunity to move toward the pass without interference.

During a forward-pass play, certain action in or behind the neutral zone, such as holding, is illegal but is not pass interference. Pass interference may occur **only beyond the neutral zone and only during a pass which crosses the neutral zone.** For the defensive team, restrictions against interference begin when the pass is in flight and end when the pass is touched. This permits the defensive team to block potential pass receivers before the ball is in the air, thereby reducing the advantage the offense may gain through a passing play. A defender may legally contact an eligible

receiver beyond the neutral zone before the pass is in flight with a legal block or by warding him off, or by pushing or pulling an opponent who is attempting to block him. However, if he is no longer a potential blocker or after an eligible receiver has changed direction and is moving away from, or is going past the defender, it is illegal use of hands for a defender to push him between the time of the snap until the ball is passed, and it is defensive pass interference for a defender to push the receiver while the ball is in flight.

When a forward pass crosses the neutral zone during a down, it is a foul for any offensive player to contact an opponent beyond the neutral zone until after the pass is touched. This includes blocking an opponent who is not on his line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. Prior to the pass being touched by a defender, it is also illegal for an offensive player to contact an opponent with his hands beyond the neutral zone. This includes warding off a legal block by a defender or pushing off a defender while making a cut.

Key point concerning a defensive player - Contact by the defense with eligible pass receivers is restricted. The "potential blocker" rule allow (9-2-3d) the defensive player to ward off or block an eligible pass receiver until he and the defensive player are on the same yard line or the receiver cuts away from the defender. The idea is once the offensive receiver gets even with or cuts away from the defensive back, he is no longer a potential blocker and is not a threat to the defensive player.

There are very limited situations in which interference does not require contact. One situation involves face guarding during the pass. In this act, the defender directs his attention to the receiver rather than to the ball. Defensive players have as much right to the path of the ball as do eligible receivers. It may be interference when two players are running side by side in parallel paths and one changes direction contacting his opponent.

ROUGHING THE PASSER. A passer is entitled to some of the protection which is granted the kicker and holder. Both are unable to adequately protect themselves. In the case of the passer, it is assumed there will be occasions when the momentum of a defensive player is such that his attempt to knock down the pass will cause him to contact the passer as he cannot stop his charge. However, the defensive player is responsible for making an effort to avoid charging into the passer after the ball has been left his hand and contact must be avoided when it can be. The defensive player may not renew his charge or start a new charge and contact the passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown. The passer is protected if he is standing still or fading back as he is considered out of the play after he has thrown the ball. The passer loses this special protection if he throws a pass from beyond the neutral zone.

Free Kick Following a Fair Catch (2-24-3). A free kick is any legal kick which puts the ball in play to start a free kick down. After the ready-for-play signal and before the kick, each player (other than the kicker and holder for a place kick) must be behind his free kick line. A free kick is used for a kickoff, for a kick following a safety and is used if a free kick is chosen following a fair catch or awarded fair catch. Remember, a fair catch is a catch by a receiver of a free kick in or beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, or of a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, after a valid signal, under conditions in which the receiver forfeits the right to advance the ball in return for protection from being blocked or tackled by an opponent.

Awarded Fair Catch (2-9-2). An awarded fair catch occurs when the offended team chooses to take the ball at the spot of the kick-catching interference rather than accepting the distance penalty from the previous spot and replaying the down. If the player catches the free kick or scrimmage kick in the air or is awarded a fair catch due to being interfered with by the kicking team, the receiving team would be entitled to a free kick (using a kicking tee or extra point tee) or snap the ball. K may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the hashmarks; for a try or kick-off; following a safety or touchback; following a fair catch or awarded fair catch; or to begin any overtime series 4-3-6, 4-3-7. This privilege remains if the down is replayed or a dead ball foul occurs. A team cannot have the ball re-spotted merely by taking a timeout.

COACHES, I would like to thank you for your cooperation in communicating in a sportsmanlike manner with our officials. We have observers out on most game nights and our feedback has been excellent. The observers tell me coaches are doing a good job of letting the officials work and the officials are doing a much better job of

communicating with coaches. Lets make an all out effort these last few weeks to work together, for the betterment of the game and your program.

OFFICIALS, there is still a lot of football to be played. Every game is important to those participating. Give it your best shot every night. It is important at this time of the season to have a good pre-game and be prepared for situations which might arise during the upcoming weeks. It's easy to stray away from the rule book and case book and football fundamentals, (found in the Rule Book on pages 79-80) when actually we need to be refreshing ourselves on situations. With the weather changing and teams vying for district championships and play-off berths, you need to be on top of your game. Put those books by your easy chair or by your bedside and read a rule a day.

ATHLETIC DIRECTORS & OFFICIALS, if a player should happen to become ill before the game or during the game on the field, we need to have someone available to clean up the disposal. Be sure this is done immediately, before you play or continue the contest.

Please be sure your clock operator, chain crew and ball boys are all at the game in a timely manner.

CLOSING

I want to thank each coach and official who have taken the time to read the IHSAA football letters during the 2007 football season. I believe because of these letters and information that is made available, communication between coaches and officials has improved.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to communicate with you during the 2007 high school football season. I wish each of you the best of luck for the remainder of the season.

Officials, thank you for your time and dedication this past season.

Best in athletics,

Roger Barr
Director of Officials

RB:jj

BEFORE OR AFTER CHANGE OF POSSESSION

If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession and the play does not have a post-scrimmage kick foul, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul, other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In this case, the team not last in possession has no penalty options. If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession and all R fouls are post-scrimmage kick fouls, then R may retain the ball, provided R declines the penalty for K's foul(s), other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul.

In this case, the team that was not last in possession has no penalty options and the foul against R will be enforced (10-2-2). A foul during a try is not paired with a dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul (10-2-5).

When both teams foul during a change of possession down and the team in final possession gets the ball free of a foul (with "clean hands"), they have the opportunity to retain possession. The fact that their opponent's foul occurred after the change of possession has no bearing on the enforcement. However, when B, the "clean hands" team, retains possession by declining the opponent's foul, the penalty for B's foul shall be enforced (10.2.2 Situation B Cmt).

Rationale: The "clean hands" rule prevents any inequity that once appeared in the rules. If A2 were illegally in motion and B1 intercepted a pass, a foul by B2 during the runback would have constituted a double foul and caused the down to be replayed. The current rule allows team B the option of accepting the penalty for the foul by A2 or declining it and retaining the ball. If the penalty for A's foul were declined in order to keep the ball, the penalty for the foul by B2 would then be administered. The rule separates the two fouls and removes them from the double foul category. A foul by the team after it has gained possession is penalized.

CASE PLAYS

10.2.2 SITUATION A: During a legal forward pass which crosses the neutral zone, A1 is illegally in motion at the snap. B1 intercepts and during his return, B2 clips A2. **RULING:** The illegal motion by A1 and the clipping by B2 are both live-ball fouls, but because the foul by B2 followed a change of possession, they do not automatically constitute a double foul.

If the captain of B declines the penalty for the illegal motion by A1, B will retain possession, but the penalty for clipping by B2 must be enforced. If B accepts the penalty for the illegal motion by A1, it is a double foul and the down will be replayed (10-103; 10-2-1b).

10.2.2 SITUATION C: A scrimmage kick by K1 is caught by R1, who advances to K's 10. During the run by R1, there is clipping by R2 at K's 30 and K2 trips R2. **RULING:** Because there was a change of team possession during the down and R2's foul followed the change, R may decline the penalty for the tripping foul by K2 and retain possession. If R chooses to do this, it will be first and 10 for R from K's 45-yard line. If R accepts the penalty for tripping by K2, it automatically results in a double foul and a replay of the down.

10.4.4 SITUATION A: Fourth and 5 for K from K's 49-yard line. R9 catches the kick on the 15-yard line and returns the ball to R's 40-yard line, where he is downed. During the return, R3 holds K7 at R's 30-yard line. **RULING:** Following enforcement of R's holding penalty, it would R's ball, first and 10 from R's 20-yard line. This is not a post-scrimmage kick enforcement, but a post-possession foul (2-41-6).

That's Using the Old Bean(bag) !

Compared to old standbys such as penalty flags and whistles, beanbags are relatively new articles of officiating equipment. The NFHS has only required the use of beanbags since 1980.



The beanbag is used to mark spots, other than the spot of a foul, that may later be needed as a reference point. Back judges (line judges on 4-official crews) may have a need to mark multiple spots on the same play and should carry two beanbags.

The beanbag should be dropped on the correct spot and not thrown; however that won't always be practical. If the spot is in a side zone, only the correct yard line is needed because any penalty enforcement would bring the ball back to the nearest hashmark. It's important to understand how a beanbag spot is to be utilized.

Scrimmage kicks present several opportunities to use the beanbag. When post-scrimmage kick enforcement applies, the basic spot as the spot where the kick ends if the ball belongs to R when the down ends. That means the end of the kick must always be marked. The beanbag should be used only if the ball is caught and advanced forward or backward. If it becomes dead either in the field of play or by going out of bounds, the beanbag is not necessary.

Punts are also an opportunity for the momentum exception. If a punt or other kick is caught or recovered by an R player between his 5-yard line and the goal line and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession or goes out of bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to R at the spot possession was obtained. The exception also applies when a B player catches or recovers a fumble inside his 5-yard line.

It's important for officials to recognize a momentum situation and to beanbag the spot where possession is gained. For the exception to apply, original momentum must be the cause of the ball entering the end zone. If the covering official judges the player voluntarily carried the ball across the goal line, regular rules apply and the play could result in a safety. The beanbagged spot might also be used to enforce a penalty which occurs after possession was obtained.

During kicks, there are times when it is improper for K to touch a ball. That is called first touching. It applies only when K touches the ball when it's not entitled to possession. That type of touching is a violation and not a foul.

On free kicks, if K touches before the ball crosses R's free-kick line and before it is touched there by any R player, the spot must be marked with the beanbag. For a scrimmage kick, the spot must be marked if K touches the ball in the field of play, beyond the line before R touches it. The spot must be marked because R may have the right to take the ball at that spot.

Fumbles. The beanbag is most often used on loose balls. For penalty enforcement, the basic spot on a running play is where the run ends. If the ball is fumbled, the run ends at the spot where possession was lost. Consequently, the spot of the fumble must be marked in the event a penalty occurs and that spot is needed. Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond the neutral zone. If the ball becomes loose behind the line, the basic spot will be the previous spot and the beanbag is not needed. Many officials have developed the habit of bagging all fumbles. Do whatever your assigner or supervisor prefers.

Remember to bag the spot only if you actually see the fumble. Otherwise your spot will likely be a yard or two off, which can be critical in some situations.