

Dear Football **Coaches & Officials**,

October 16, 2008

**Officials:** I would like to thank all the individual officials and crews who participated in the “Calling for a Cure” pink whistle week.

**WINDING DOWN THE 2008 REGULAR FOOTBALL SEASON!!**

District championships and play-off qualifications are at there highest level, with that said, we need to be ready as coaches and officials to rise up and accept those challenges. Coaches and officials shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession.

**EJECTIONS:** To this point we have had 26 players ejected and one coach. Coaches, I continue to encourage you to take five minutes each week and visit with your players about “Good Sportsmanship” and the importance that Character Counts. With the season winding down, inform your players what could be at stake if they are ejected, with the possibility they could miss a play-off contest. Inform players that they not only affect themselves if they are ejected from the game, but their fellow teammates, coaching staff, school and spectators. The IHSAA thanks coaches in advance that take time to visit with your players concerning GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP, it is a priority.

**END OF QUARTER OR HALF GAME SITUATIONS:** Timing errors on the game clock may be corrected if discovered by officials prior to the second live ball following the error, unless the period has ended. Officials need to pay close attention to the clock throughout the game, but particularly important near the end of a half when time management is critical. Crews should designate an individual who is not covering the play, to check the clock to be sure if it is to be stopped it is stopped in a timely manner. Same holds true when the clock should be started. Referees’ should review with clock operator before the game starts that any crew member can stop the clock, but the clock should be started by the referee. If the referee (umpire assist) starts the clock and it shouldn’t be running, back-judge should have knowledge what time needs to be put back on the clock. Communicate and concentrate, it will help eliminate timing errors. I understand officials can’t shut the clock off, nor start the clock, but what officials can do is a better job of monitoring time on the clock.

**FAIR CATCH:** Here's a summary of the rules of a fair catch:

For a fair catch to be made Team R must give a valid signal;

Only the receiver(s) who gives a valid signal can make a fair catch and is thus afforded protection;

After the signal, the ball must be caught for a fair catch. A ball which touches the ground and is recovered is not a fair catch;

Anytime a valid or invalid fair catch signal is given, the ball becomes dead when possession is obtained by either team beyond the neutral zone;

A scrimmage kick recovered by the kicking team in or behind the neutral zone remains live even though team R signals;

A fair catch cannot be made in the end zone, the ball is dead when it breaks the plane of team R's goal line;

A fair catch cannot be made behind the line on a scrimmage kick, or behind Team K's line on a free kick, but the ball becomes dead when caught or recovered by the receivers if a signal was given;

Protection ends when the kick is touched by a Team R player beyond the line or it strikes the ground;

When in doubt, the fair catch signal is valid.

**Option to snap or free kick:** After a made or awarded fair catch, Team R has the option to put the ball in play by snap or free kick. That choice remains if:

A dead ball foul occurs

A foul or inadvertent whistle occurs during the down following the fair catch and the down is replayed

When a fair catch is made or awarded, and either of the above apply, offensive team's captain may choose to free kick for a field goal or snap anywhere between the inbounds lines (6-5-4).

**EXTENDING A PERIOD:** A period is extended if during the last timed down:

There is an **accepted penalty** for a live ball foul, not penalized as a dead-ball foul and does not include the loss of down.

There are **offsetting fouls**.

There is an **inadvertent whistle**.

A touchdown is scored, the period is extended for the try, unless the touchdown is scored as time expires in the fourth quarter and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or play-off qualification (13 point rule in Iowa).

The period is not extended further when the defense fouls during a successful try and the offended team accepts the results of the play with enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.

**ILLEGAL TOUCHING:** With regard to ineligible receiver touching a pass, the rules distinguish between intentional and accidental touching of the ball. If an ineligible player bats, muffs, or catches a legal forward pass (intentional act), it is a foul for illegal touching (7-5-13). **This carries a penalty of five yards with loss of down enforced under the all-but-one principle.**

Illegal touching applies equally behind and beyond the neutral zone (7-5-13). It is no longer offensive pass interference if an ineligible touches the ball beyond the neutral zone.

If the team A ineligible does not attempt to touch the forward pass, but is instead inadvertently struck by the ball, the touching is ignored and there is no foul. **Such touching, does not however, excuse intentional grounding.**

**Example:** Second and 10 on team A's 30 yard line. Ineligible A76 tries to catch A10's forward pass at his (a) 28 yard line; or (b) 35 yard line, and touches the ball. Ruling: In either case it is illegal touching, **a five yard penalty with loss of down**. In (a) it will be third and 17 from team A's 23 yard line (the penalty is enforced from the spot where A76 touched the pass). In (b), it will be third and 15 from team A's 25 yard line (the penalty is enforced from the previous spot).

**FOOTBALL COACHES:** The IHSAA would like to invite your football team to attend the 2008 Iowa Football Championship Games at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls when your class is participating on Friday, November 21 and Saturday, November 22, 2008.

Friday, November 21  
8 player @ 10:35 AM  
Class A @ 2:00 PM  
Class 4A @ 7:05 PM

Saturday, November 22  
Class 1-A @ 10:05 AM  
Class 2-A @ 1:00 PM  
Class 3A @ 4:00 PM

With paid admission by your coaches and players, any team who did not participate in the football play-offs (including sub-state) upon notification to our office by Monday 17, 10:00 AM, that your squad will be attending the 2008 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. If you make mascot or logo available to us, we will show it on the video board in the UNI-DOME when your team is introduced. This recognition will take place during the championship game of your respective class.

**OFFICIALS:** When teams get into the **red-zone**, back-judge it would be helpful if you would make your wings aware of where the goal line is following each play. Simple mechanic would be similar to signal 41, palms facing the field of play from the hips out indicating, **here is the goal line.**

Friends can accept each other without a need to change, improve, or judge, but people with authority have a duty to be more demanding. It takes character to be a **good teacher, official, boss or coach.** –Michael Josephson

### CLOSING

Coaches and officials need to be good communicators and work together to preserve this great game of football. I want to thank each of you for reading this year's football letters. **The IHSAA and Board of Control thank coaches and officials for your commitment, dedication and time in working with our youth.**

I've enjoyed the opportunity to communicate with you during the 2008 Iowa High School Football season. We wish you the best of luck the remainder of the season.

**Remember, good game management skills may be your most important product!!**

Sincerely,

Roger Barr  
Director of Officials