

October 14, 2009

## THIRD FOOTBALL MEMO

**COACHES AND OFFICIALS:** It is hard to believe that we are winding down the 2009 football season. Hopefully all coaches are taking approximately five minutes sometime during each week to visit with their players about character and good sportsmanship. Be sure to discuss the consequences with your team and individual player(s) if he/she would be ejected in a contest. To date we have had 36 players and 5 coaches ejected. Please take the necessary steps to assist your program from an ejection happening to one of your players or a coaching staff member. This is especially important to teams, players and coaches with the play-offs fast approaching. With district championships and qualifying sub-state contests on the line, we all want to make sure we provide our best effort each and every night.

**COACHES AND OFFICIALS:** While I've been out observing I'm disappointed in a few coaching staffs and officiating crews who are NOT enforcing or coaching staffs who are not abiding by the NEW RESTRICTED AREA. I had a report from one crew who said the first four weeks were great and week five they had three sideline violations (flags) on one team and two on the other team. The part that disappointed me the most was a school who appeared to me to test the officials to see if they were going to enforce the restricted area or not and then proceeded to totally violate the rule. I was very disappointed with the wing official in this particular case as they made no effort to clean this up. The first warning carries no penalty, but what it does do is send a message that the rule will be enforced if any additional violations by that team do occur. If I was a coach on the other side of the field and abiding by the rule, I would be disappointed in a crew who elected not to enforce the rule on the opposing sideline. I have a difficult time buying the line, "do you want me to watch the coaches or the game?" You have a pretty darn good idea if there is a violation of the rule taking place or not and if you question it, after the next play, just say "make sure this restricted area is clean when the play is in progress."

**COACHES AND OFFICIALS:** Field Goal;

A field goal attempt is a scrimmage kick, and the rules are basically the same as for a punt. A field goal scores three points for the kicking team and can be either a placekick or drop kick from scrimmage, or a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch. For a **placekick**, the ball must be controlled on the ground or a tee by a teammate (2-24-7). For a successful kick, the entire ball must pass between the vertical uprights, or the inside edges of the uprights extended, and above the crossbar of the opponent's goal (8-4-1c). An unsuccessful field goal attempt that is untouched by Team R beyond the neutral zone and is declared dead in the field of play belongs to Team R at the dead-ball spot (5-1-3e). A kick which rolls into Team R's end zone, whether touched or untouched, is a touchback (8-5-3a2). If it goes into the end zone in flight, it becomes dead as soon as it is unsuccessful **after** breaking the plane of the goal line. On the other hand, if the ball fails to cross the neutral zone, or if team R touches it beyond the neutral zone, then it remains live (provided the ball was not at rest when the receiving team touches the ball). Either team may advance the ball if it is recovered behind the neutral zone, but becomes dead if Team K recovers it beyond the zone. If Team K touches the ball beyond the neutral zone before it is touched by Team R, it is first touching. Team R may return the kick regardless of where they recover or catch it except from their own end zone. The receiving team may catch a field goal attempt just as they are entitled to catch any punt. However as previously stated, once it is apparent the kick will not score and the ball has broken the plane of the goal line, the ball is dead. It is a touchback and anything which takes place afterwards is of no consequence.

**COACHES AND OFFICIALS:** Helping the Runner/Block in the Back;

An offensive player shall not **push, pull or lift the runner to assist his forward progress**. An offensive player shall **not block a defensive player attempting to tackle a runner in the back in order to assist the runner/pile forward** (subject to illegal block in the back foul). Always make sure you have the number(s) who commit the foul. If the foul is border-line warn (let the violating coach know) and penalize any further infractions.

**COACHES AND OFFICIALS:** Face Mask Foul;

It is a foul for any player to grasp an opponent's face mask, or any edge of a helmet opening. NEW IN 2009: It is now a foul for any player to grasp the chin strap. The edge most likely to be grasped is the back of the helmet. Distinction is made between **“incidental grasping,” (5 yard penalty)** and **“twisting, turning, or pulling” (15 yard penalty)** 9-4-3h. **Simply touching the face mask is not a foul.** However, **incidental grasping of the face mask is a five-yard penalty.** Twisting, turning or pulling the face mask is a 15 yard penalty. Neither penalty has provisions for awarding an automatic first down. The 5 or 15 yard option applies whether the offending player is on team A or team B.

**COACHES AND OFFICIALS:** Chop Block;

A chop block is a delayed block at the knees or below against an opponent (other than the runner) who is in contact with a teammate of the blocker in the free-blocking zone (2-3-8). The penalty for a chop block is 15 yards (9-3-6). Such contact outside the zone is an illegal block below the waist. If the blocks are simultaneous or if the opponent has disengaged from the first block when the second block occurs, there cannot be a chop block.

**COACHES AND OFFICIALS:** Hurdling;

We are seeing this on occasion and I want to call all of your attention to this dangerous act. **Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over a player who is still on his feet and is a foul (15 yards) (2-22, 9-4-3d personal foul 15 yards).**

**COACHES AND OFFICIALS:** Free Blocking Zone;

The free blocking zone is a rectangle measuring roughly eight yards laterally and six yards longitudinally (eight player; six yards laterally and six yards longitudinally) centered on the spot of the snap. It disintegrates as soon as the ball leaves the zone (keep in mind, shot-gun formation will cause the ball to leave the zone within a very short time frame). Low blocks and blocks from the rear are permitted within the zone provided certain conditions are met. These conditions always include: The contact takes place in the zone, and before the ball leaves the zone. A player is in the zone (offense or defense) when any part of his body is in the zone at the snap and on the line of scrimmage by definition. A defensive player is on his line of scrimmage when he is within one yard of the neutral zone at the snap. For the most part, an offensive tackle will be in the zone when he is four yards from the ball (three yards eight player). There could be times in the eight player game when an offensive tackle could be considered out of the zone (depending on the linemen splits). I encourage officials and coaches to walk this distance off, to really understand the free blocking zone and how big this zone really is. If a team doesn't use wide splits the offensive and defensive ends could very well land in this zone. KEY; if the team uses a shot gun formation (no hand-to-hand snap) the free blocking zone disintegrates as soon as the ball leaves the zone (3 yards back from the line-of -scrimmage). If a team does use a shot-gun formation, linemen in the zone, blocking defensive linemen in the zone below the wait, must do so immediately following the snap to be legal. If the block is delayed from this formation, coaches and officials must understand the ball has already left the zone, therefore the offensive player would be throwing an illegal block if he initially blocks below the waist or clips an opponent who was in the zone at the snap.

**FOOTBALL QUIKSTATS INFORMATION 2009-10**

Our check dates for compliance are **2 p.m. September 14, October 5, and Oct. 26 at 3p.m. and after every post season game.** Some districts are going to a mandatory posting, every week reporting. **We appreciate your cooperation pertaining to this required program.**

**OFFICIALS:** Please recommend any outstanding chain-gang crews you see during the season!! We select crews for our championship games in the UNI-Dome from these official's recommendations.

## **OFFICIALS: SPORTSMANSHIP RATINGS ON-LINE**

If you officiate any varsity level football contests, you must login to your “INDIVIDUAL OFFICIALS INFORMATION” page with your password and rate each school. Once logged in, click on “Enter Your Sportsmanship.” If you have any changes to your ratings, you can log back in, see what you have completed, and make necessary changes yourself.

**NOTE:** Enter your sportsmanship ratings after each **varsity** contest while it is fresh in your mind; it will also help Athletic Directors who wish to look at their sportsmanship ratings part way into the season to make sure coaches, players and their spectators are doing their part in making **GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP** a priority. Those of you who are selected to work football play-offs will have until 5:00PM, **November 23, 2009**, to finalize your play-off sportsmanship ratings.

Sincerely,  
Roger Barr