



IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Football Memo #6

September 21, 2022

Good morning football coaches and athletic directors –

The regular season is halfway complete for nearly 2/3 of our schools, which is very hard to believe. As continue towards the playoffs, we know many of you will celebrate homecoming over the next two weeks. Please communicate with your opponent prior to their arrival about any festivities that may not be routine with an ordinary home game (i.e. 20-minute halftime).

1. Free Kicks - Punts

I've had more than a handful of coaches ask whether or not it is legal to punt the football as a kickoff. A punt cannot be used as a free kick following a successful field goal, any try or at the beginning of each half. A team may punt the football as a free kick following a safety.

2. Contact on an Eligible Receiver

Rule 9-2-3d allows a defensive player to treat an eligible receiver as a potential blocker and ward him off before the pass is thrown. However, if the receiver is not attempting to block, the defender may not initiate the contact. A generally accepted guideline is to allow contact until the receiver occupies the same yard line as the defender. The idea is once the receiver gets even with or cuts away from the defender, he is no longer a potential blocker and is not a threat to the defensive player. DPI restrictions do not begin until the ball is thrown, so the penalty in the above situation prior to the ball being in flight would be illegal use of hands for a 10-yard penalty or defensive holding depending on the restriction. There is no, and never had been, a 5-yard bump and run in NFHS rules.

3. Dead Ball Officiating

I know this is more of an officiating topic, but I want to share this with our schools as well. Dead ball officiating is more critical than live ball officiating in some instances. Once the ball is dead, officials need to maintain a presence. Using physical presence and voices to communicate can de-escalate the situations quickly and should prevent situations from getting worse. For example, the umpire steps in to spot the ball and hears borderline inappropriate comments coming from unidentified players from both teams. The umpire steps between the players and firmly recognizes to the players to stop this interaction or there could be a flag for taunting. Any and all officials need to handle players in this manner. Communication is the key.

To be clear, don't stand back and watch a situation get worse. Get in there and prevent it from happening to begin with.

4. Ball Becoming Dead

We have heard of some debates between coaches and officials as to when the down the ends. Per rule 4-2-2, there are 12 ways for the ball to become dead to end a down. The play kills itself, when the ball/player down/progress is stopped the play is dead, while the whistle only kills the play for an inadvertent whistle. The whistle confirms that the play is over. It is possible to have a late whistle on a play, which doesn't mean the play didn't end. It just means the officials waited to confirm they saw the ball/play dead. A late whistle is better than an inadvertent whistle.

5. Postseason Manual

While we still have a long ways to go in the regular season, the postseason manual is now posted online:

<https://www.iahsaa.org/manuals/football-postseason/>.

6. Reconditioning Standards

We have received correspondence from the National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association through the NFHS regarding the reconditioning of football helmets. The correspondence can be found here and the guidance within the letter needs to be followed as you look ahead to the 2023 football season. <https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-NAERA-recommendations.pdf>

Best of luck during Week 5. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions.

Jared