



IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Football Memo #5

September 13, 2023

Good afternoon football coaches and athletic directors. District play starts in two more classes this week. We've received a handful of game situation questions over the last two weeks and will try to be brief in bringing everyone onto the same page.

1. Scrimmage Kick Formation

In the August 30 memo, I covered numbering requirements and made mention of the numbering exception for scrimmage kick formations. I've had multiple coaches and officials reach out regarding this topic. A scrimmage kick formation is defined under 2-14-2 of the rule book. Part of the definition includes a player in position with a knee on the ground 7 or more yards behind the LOS, in position to be a holder and receive the long snap, with the other option of a player 10 yards or more behind the LOS and in position to receive a long snap. Why is this definition and yardages important? If the formation doesn't meet this definition, the numbering exception cannot apply. Team K can still punt the football if the punter lines up less than 10 yards from the LOS at the snap; however, Team K must have five individuals on the LOS numbered 50-79 and the snapper is not given protection.

2. Penalty Under 2 Minutes in Half

Last fall there was a rule change that allowed the offended team to have the option to start the game clock on the snap when a foul is committed with less than two minutes remaining in either half. For example, Team B is trailing with less than two minutes remaining in the game. On third down, A53 commits a holding foul and Team A is stopped short of the line to gain inbounds. Ruling: Whether B accepts A's foul for holding, B may choose to start the clock on the snap. The key to this rule is the option stated: starting the game clock on the snap. The reverse is not true. A team never has the option to start the clock on the ready when it is start on the snap by rule. For example, Team B is ahead with less than two minutes remaining in the game. On third down, A53 commits a holding foul and Team A's pass falls incomplete. Ruling: Whether B accepts A's foul for holding, B may not choose to start the clock on the ready as by rule the ball is to start on the snap because of the incomplete pass.

3. Blindside Block

We all know football is a physical sport. There is a difference between being physical within the rules of the game and being physical when an opponent isn't suspecting to be hit after the play or from the blindside.

By definition, a blindside block is a block against an opponent other than the runner, who does not see the blocker approaching. It is a foul when a player executes a blindside block outside of the free-blocking zone with forceful contact unless initiated with open hands. While blindside blocks can occur on any play, the potential of a blindside block is greater on a kick play or a change of possession.

We have made it a point through our officials training videos to help teach what is and isn't a blindside block. While officials need to call this play correctly on the field, coaches need to understand the rule as well to teach to their players what is and isn't a legal hit.

Our office is becoming disturbed by the volume of communication received from member schools about alleged comments from players and sideline personnel referencing taking kids out during a contest. As adults, we cannot be promoting or encouraging this type of behavior. We all love this sport and want it to thrive well into the future, and the game depends on us stressing safety and fair play with our athletes.

Have a great Week 4. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Jared