

CFOA NEWS

CFOA MEMBERS – The famous words of Bruce Buffer “It’s TIME!” I want to thank all the association leaders for their time in preparing the members for this season. The high school football season is the shortest and takes the most time to prepare. Good luck in all your games and enjoy these times on and off the field.

Regards,

Bobby Kennedy

The Passing Game

REMEMBER FROM 2012: if a player is airborne when he receives the ball, is hit by an opponent, and lands out of bounds, he not made a catch...

REMEMBER FROM 2013: unless he is caught and carried out of bounds backwards or sideways.

REMEMBER FROM 2013: the penalty for offensive pass interference is 15 yards from the previous spot and the down is repeated. The loss of down was removed.

REMEMBER FROM 2013: The penalty for defensive pass interference is 15 yards from the previous spot, and the down is repeated. An automatic first down was removed.

REMEMBER FROM 2014: All illegal personal contact fouls listed in 9-4-3 against the passer are roughing fouls.

REMEMBER FROM 2015: Except incidental face mask fouls.

Downfield Contact

When an eligible receiver goes downfield on a play where a forward pass crosses the neutral zone, he may not block until the pass has been touched.

The defender may, however, treat the receiver as a potential blocker and use unlocked arms to ward him off before a pass is thrown. If the receiver is not attempting to block, by going past or moving away from the defender, the defender may not make contact (9-2-3d).

A guideline is to allow contact until the receiver occupies the same yard line as the defender or until the opponent cannot possibly block him.

Continuous contact is illegal.

“The achievements of an organization are the results of a combined effort of each individual.”

- Vince Lombardi

In This Issue

- The Passing Game/ Downfield Contact
- Distance, Angles and Field-of-Vision
- EQUIPMENT
- Coaches Cannot Argue On the Field
- Kicker Becomes a Runner
- Tips for Calling Pass Interference
- Sideline Consistency, Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Sideline Communication

Distance, Angles and Field-of-Vision

Under the “Mobile Box” concept, the idea is to facilitate officials’ movement to the spot where they are most likely to need to be to make a call / no-call even as they strive to be as stationary as possible at the time a call / no-call is made. The ideal distance to be away from action that is being judged is approximately 10-15 yards. While this is clearly not a possibility on all plays, keeping as much distance from the play as possible without being too far away from the action to be judged is important to each official on each play.

In addition to distance, each official needs to strive to have a field-of-vision in front of him of something just short of approximately 45 degrees to either the left or right. That is he needs to be able to see without turning his head all the action in his area of responsibility without having to turn his head to see this action if at all possible. Effective field-of-vision varies between individuals; therefore, there is no one “standard” that can be applied. Based upon individual limits, officials need to be far enough away for their field-of-vision to see all pertinent action in their areas of responsibility. This means people with narrower fields-of-vision must be more distant from the action they need to observe. However, this comes at the cost of having less ability to see important detail at that distance. Each official has to adjust appropriately to his own physical limitations. And when his visual acuity diminishes for whatever reason, he must know when it is time for him to find a different avocation that doesn’t require the good eyesight that is required to be an effective football official.

Officials must avoid artificially narrowing their field-of-vision by concentrating too closely on any one aspect of action in their area of responsibility. The most frequent and obvious problem of this type to be avoided is “ball watching” or concentrating too closely on the ball as to miss important action in the area of the ball. For example, officials with responsibility for forward progress on a play must also have enough concentration away from the ball to be able to correctly determine whether an eventual tackle on the ball carrier was done legally.

Another important concept is to avoid “straight lining” where some important aspect of the play is obscured by another aspect of the play. For example, the official’s view to the ball may be blocked by a player’s body; or a player’s body may block the view of the official to the player’s hands – keeping the official from being able to detect Holding. This means keeping an “angle” of observance “to the side” of the action. This does not need to be a large angle, but there must be enough of an angle to observe all action pertinent to the call / no-call to be made.

EQUIPMENT

If you’re judging equipment to be illegal, make sure you are 100% correct.

When we enforce the wrong rules regarding equipment we lose all credibility with the coaches.

By the way, yellow gloves are legal. Towels must be one color/any color but must be the same color worn by any member of the same team. Hint – white works really well.

Coaches Cannot Argue On the Field

We have a very strong commitment to communicate with the head coaches and if there is an important question or a huge concern, referees must take that conversation into the team box.

Coaches questioning calls on the field are unsportsmanlike acts according to the rules of football.

Conversations at the sideline are just that. Coaches are to stay off the field and referees are to hold conferences at the sideline.

Pretty simple but hard to accomplish. We have to work together!

Kicker Becomes a Runner

If a kicker chooses or is forced to run and then kicks the ball, the protection usually offered a kicker is lost UNLESS the kicker has time to stop and clearly re-establish himself as a kicker.

This does not mean the defense can then “plant the kicker in the ground” after the kick. That is a personal foul for unnecessary roughness.

What they can do is try to tackle the kicker before he kicks or block the kick as he attempts to kick it. Any contact of this sort will not be roughing the kicker as the kicker is actually a runner!

For the runner to become a kicker again, he must have a lot of time to stop, re-establish his position as a kicker. Only then is he afforded the protections usually afforded a kicker (roughing or running into).

Tips for Calling Pass Interference

There are two indicators that make a player “suspect” for pass interference:

Bite- When a player 'bites' on a move and then has to try to recover, such as when a receiver does a hook 'n' go - if he bites on the hook, he will frequently try to recover by grabbing the receiver as he goes by, etc., which can turn into pass interference

Chase- When a player is chasing an opponent, either by design or because he is beaten, he will tend to commit pass interference

There six categories of Pass Interference:

1. **Arm Bar** - an arm across the body restricting the opponent from moving where he wants to go. An arm across the body is not enough - there must be a restriction of movement.
2. **Hold** - actually grasping an opponent, particularly the arm, restricting him from being able to reach a pass. Classically, grabbing an arm, keeping the opponent from raising it to catch the pass.
3. **Not playing the ball** - the player is not making a bona fide effort to reach the pass (usually not looking back for the ball), and contacts the opponent (usually body to body) restricting him from moving where he wants to go, or knocking him off his path to the ball.
4. **Playing through the back** - even if making an effort to touch the pass, contacting an opponent through the back, restricting his ability to touch the pass.
5. **Hook and twist** - hooking the arm around the waist or shoulders, AND twisting the opponent, restricting him from his effort to touch the pass. An arm around the body is not enough - there must be a twist or turn.
6. **Cutoff** - even if looking back for the ball, a player cannot position himself to restrict or prevent an opponent from moving toward a pass.

The National Federation allows for face guarding being grounds as pass interference, as for all other contact or restriction must occur for pass interference to be called.

Note that two players both making an effort to reach the ball might 'bang arms' - no foul.

Pass Interference is almost always going to occur from the waist up. Player running side by side or in tandem that get their feet tangled with no obvious intent to impede - no foul.

There are 3 categories of OPI (Off. pass interference)

- 1: Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched (Commonly refereed to as the pick play)
- 2: Shoving or pushing off, and creating separation. (This is the most common type of OPI)
- 3: Driving through a defender who had established position.

Sideline Consistency

Helping Teams and Coaches – As Ed Hochuli says, “Part of our job keeping coaches out of trouble.”

So, when it comes to sidelines we know that all coaches are to be out of the Restricted Area (white) whenever the ball is about to become live (SAFETY). Then, when the ball is dead, coaches are allowed to enter the Restricted Area, but not on the field. Our job is to help the “Get Back Coach” who helps keep the players and coaches off the field and out of the Restricted Area when the ball is about to become live.

Flank officials need to be consistent in their abilities to maintain a safe and legal sideline. Verbal warnings and reminders are helpful. A sideline warning (throwing flag and stopping game to administer the warning which carries no yardage penalty) is also helpful in communicating that there seems to be a lack of cooperation or focus on staying within the rules by team members. Head coaches can comply easily with this rule if it is consistently enforced. Officials sometimes say, “Don’t hunt this foul, let this foul hunt you!” which is a good ‘ol way of saying prevent first, stay focused on the game action, but if it becomes a foul, then it’s a foul

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

It is unsportsmanlike conduct for any non-player (or coach) to be on the field, so we do what is described above to prevent that from accidentally happening. But it is an immediate, unsportsmanlike foul if a coach or non-player acts in an unsportsmanlike manner by coming on the field to use profanity, insult, attempt to influence, disrespect, or object to an official’s decision. If the act is flagrant and prolonged, and the coach is persistent, an immediate 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty must be assessed. The act demands it, and it should be penalized.

Sideline Communication

Conversely, all officials must provide important information to the sideline. Foul information is an example of “important information.”

Big plays sometimes involve an official’s judgment.

When the referee feels he has important information for a head coach, he will call an official’s time out and share at the sideline so the coach does not have to come out on the field. If the coach request information, then the referee will make every attempt to stop the game and communicate (again, at the sideline so the coach does not come on the field). These time outs can disrupt the flow of the game so coaches need to understand that continually interrupting the game can be frustrating for coaches, players and fans. It helps if the communication is quick and then we get back to action.