

# CFOA NEWS

CFOA Newsletter

Volume 5

**CFOA Members** – Hope everyone is enjoying their football season. I have worked several games so far this year and I am still seeing an inconsistent approach towards unnecessary contact calls by officials. It clearly states in the 2015 NFHS Points of Emphasis that game officials need to be aware of situations that are likely to produce unnecessary or excessive contact. Blindside blocks, peel-back blocks, and airborne receivers attempting to secure the ball oftentimes provide windows of opportunity for these potentially dangerous contact situations to occur. Players leaving their feet (launching) and initiating contact with opponents should be penalized immediately as unnecessary or excessive contact.

Spectators, players and coaches should not promote nor celebrate any act that endangers the safety, health and welfare of an opponent. Players of both teams should always be treated with the utmost respect. **The safety, health and welfare of all players should be everyone's priority.**

I would encourage that all the referees mention this in their pre-game meeting with coaches concerning the **2015 NFHS Risk Minimization Points of Emphasis**. It has to be cleaned up, talking to a player(s) and warning them is not going to get it one. **It is a FOUL.**

Please continue to address this **Point of Emphasis** in your meetings.

If anyone in your unit would like to write an article or submit a crew or action photo to place in the newsletter, please email it to me at [bbbknnd@gmail.com](mailto:bbbknnd@gmail.com)

Regards,

Bobby Kennedy  
California Football Officials Association  
Instructional Chairman



Los Padres Football Officials Association Referee Jimmy Gin at Santa Ynez High School

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*"I'm not one of those coaches who cries about officiating. You can't whine about a play that happened two plays ago. You have to focus on what's in front."*

*-Sandy Pugh*

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2015 California Football Officials Association Study Guide Dedicated to Tracey McFate

## Tracey McFate—CFOA Foothill Citrus

Tracey McFate began his football officiating career in 1973 with the Foothill Citrus unit. He retired from on the field officiating in 2012. He continues to be the assignor for Foothill Citrus a position he ha held for 19 year.

Tracey has officiated approximately 75 CIF Playoff games including 9 CIF finals. At the collegiate level Tracy worked 6 years in the Big West Conference and also received assignments from the PAC 12, Mountain West and WAC. In post season he worked 5 NCAA Division III Playoff games including the 2010 semi-final game in Dover Delaware. Additional Tracey has worked four Southern California Community College finals and 2 State Finals.

When the Southern California Colligate Football Officials Association was formed Tracey was selected as the original President. Additionally he was the clinician for the SCCFOA for 11 years.

Tracey retired from Azusa Pacific University and live in Glendora with his wife Connie. They have two children son, Ryan and daughter, Katie.

## Errors in Judgment

If you are honestly evaluating yourself on HUDL, then you most likely have seen yourself making an error in judgment. There are three things recommended that you do when this happens.

- 1) Check your mechanics – Were you in the right spot to make the correct call? If not, fix your mechanics.
- 2) Slow down in your decision making – You have much more time than you think to make decisions on the field. Slow down, go slower, then slow down some more!
- 3) Have a crew chief look at the call – don't settle for anyone but one of our association's best to review your call!

## Know Your Stuff

The very best officials read the rules often.

- Consider reading a section of the rule book each day.
- If you work other levels with rule variations be aware of the differences.
- Highlight sections you don't fully understand and ask fellow officials to explain it to you.
- When reading the rule book, try and find the philosophy on why the rule exists.



**Authorized Confer-  
ences Rule 2-6-2  
Clean This Up  
Early!!**

**2 types of author-  
ized team confer-  
ences**

**Outside 9 yard  
marks**

•One or more team members and one or more coaches in front of team box within 9 yards of sideline

•Use of electronics with players allowed

**Between 9 yard  
marks**

•One coach on the field to confer with no more than 11 players at the huddle, between the hash marks, anywhere along the length of the field

•Use of electronics with players not allowed

**Change of posses-  
sion is not a time  
out!!**

•Keep coaches off of field when teams call the first play of a new series with team on sideline

## Penalties & Enforcement

### Philosophical Approach

The “Quality” of your call or no-call can significantly affect the course of a game.

Remember the purpose of the game – to legally advance the ball.

As an official, your job is to judge the execution & if necessary, the intent of a player. If an illegal act occurs, you must then process the following three things:

- **Does the infraction affect the play?**
- **Does it concern player safety or sportsmanship?**
- **Did his team gain an advantage during the course of the play due to that illegal action?**

“Ball position on the field” or “time on the clock” has no bearing on these three actions because consistency is the objective for officials.

Don’t be too technical, avoid “nitpick” or “gotcha” calls, make it be there, especially major fouls!

Phantom calls are truly game interrupters, see the entire play or keep the flag in your pocket.

If the action falls into a gray area of “foul or no foul”, then it should be considered “no foul” unless safety or sportsmanship is a factor.

Use HUDL video to assist you in recognizing “warning signs” and improving your decision making abilities.

## Penalty Flag Trivia

Flag first used in a college game in 1941. Whistles or horns were used until then.

The flag was red/white striped.

Flag officially adopted in 1948.

Red colored in HS and college until early 70’s.

NFL used white until 1965.

CFL uses orange.

Orlando Brown settled for a reported \$25m after being hit in the eye with a flag from NFL Referee Jim Triplette in 1999

# Five Referees? Believe It!

## Referee of the Defense

That would be the **Back Judge**. He/She is responsible for counting the defense and verifying the count with other game official(s) who are counting the defense. The Back Judge is also the chief dead-ball for defense and must strive to keep all 22 players in view when the play ends. That won't be possible on every play because the Back Judge needs to get to the sideline when players go out of bounds. Getting within an earshot of opponents can provide useful information on the tone of the game and doing so acts as a deterrent to extracurricular activity. A critical role for the Back Judge that is sometimes overlooked is that of a coordinator for fouls called downfield. This especially applies to pass plays. Depending upon the position of the receiver the covering defender and their location on the field, the play may only be viewed from limited angles. An example is an arm bar that is visible only from the sideline and not from the middle of the field. When a play occurs in an overlapping area and there is only one flag, the Back Judge must convene a quick discussion to piece together the puzzle. When there are two (or more) flags, it must be ascertained that the flags were for the same offense. Such a discussion also makes sense on possible catches near a sideline where one game official has the best view of possession and another on whether or not the receiver was inbounds when the catch was completed.

## The Referee of First Downs

The **Line Judge** is in the best position to quickly determine if the play has resulted in a first down for team A. Years ago, the preferred mechanic was for the Referee to run up to the line after every play and make that determination. When you think about it, that is inefficient (and probably wasted) movement. Replaced players must leave "immediately," which means within three seconds of the substitute's arrival. If the Referee is not monitoring the huddle, he/she won't know if that rule is violated. The Referee should always know how many players are in Team A's huddle. When a play ends near the line to gain, the Line Judge must signal to the Referee. If the ball is clearly short, he/she will signal the next down. If it is a first down, he/she will so signal that to the Referee (a finger on the chest pointing downfield is the preferred signal). If it's too close to call, he/she will wave the Referee to come forward. In the latter of the two cases, he/she must first stop the clock.

## The Referee of the Line-to-Gain Equipment

The line-to-gain equipment can be tended by three to seven persons; four people is typical for a prep game. It is truly a "crew within a crew" and the Head Linesman is the Referee of that group. It is important for the **Head Linesman** to have a thorough pregame meeting with the line-to-gain crew. The proper and efficient function of the line-to-gain equipment is often taken for granted and that can make a premature movement of the line-to-gain equipment to be a devastating error. At the prep level, the line-to-gain equipment crew is sometimes recruited just before the game begins and the members are not always willing volunteers. The Head Linesman must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the crew he/she is handed and ensure they don't negatively impact the game.

## The Referee of the Ball

A hub is the effective center of activity, and in a football game that distinction falls on the **Umpire**. There is no escaping that, like it or not; the Umpire is in the middle of virtually every play. That physical presence aids his stature as the hub of the crew, but is not the entire story. The Umpire is key to the proper functioning of the crew. By promptly retrieving and spotting the ball, the Umpire allows his crewmates to have more time to perform their post-play and pre-snap duties. Hopefully the days of the "bucket brigade," where three game officials relay the ball to an immobile Umpire, are long gone.

## The Referee of the Referees

That leaves the game official who actually has the title of **Referee**. He/she is responsible for the overall functioning of the crew and ensures everyone is working as a team. However, there are a few things for which he/she is not the sole Referee. One is managing the clock, which is a crew responsibility. Every game official has a role in ensuring the clock functions correctly. After a change of possession, all game officials should either signal for the clock to stop or check to see that it has stopped. Continuing to wave the arms after the clock is stopped detracts from dead-ball officiating. Perhaps one of the biggest mistakes made by game officials is the belief that the Referee is totally responsible for penalty enforcement. Although the Referee makes the announcement and is thus the most visible game official, every crew member has a role in properly enforcing a penalty. The process begins with a short and succinct explanation of the foul that was flagged. If the information is not conveyed correctly, the Referee cannot possibly get his part right.