

San Diego County Football Officials Association Memo

To: Crew Chiefs, Head Coaches, and Athletic Directors

CC: SDCFOA Instructors & Staff

From: Steve Coover, Instructional Chair SDCFOA

Date: 9/24/2009

Re: **Weekly Bulletin #4**

Communication with Head Coaches

One of the responsibilities and qualifications for a good flank official is positive, productive communication with the head coach on your sideline. I received a report this week that the flank official became non-communicative and ignored what the head coach had to say or questions he had. This is unacceptable. On the other hand, if the coach is complaining most plays, then you have a responsibility to describe how that is an unreal demand on your time and concentration. Ask for his help in selecting those plays that are a major. Coaches must accept that judgment is never perfect and we don't reverse judgment calls unless the crew acknowledges an error. Screaming and demanding at the official on your side rarely helps the situation.

Restricted Area

Just a point of clarification (again). During the dead ball period (after the play is over) coaches may enter the restricted area. As the ball is ready for play, all coaches are to be out of the restricted area. We do not limit the number of coaches who can enter the restricted area during dead balls to three.

Pass Interference Calls from Away Official

As we discussed with Jim Arnaiz during our passing and special teams sessions with flanks and back judges, there are usually two officials with good but different looks on longer passes. The pass over the middle with the safety closing from behind is a tough call for the back judge because he's behind the play and depth perception is blocked. In this case the flank official may need to rule on DPI. Conversely, a receiver on a "go route" has the flank in a chase position. In this case the flank may not see the separation between the receiver and the closing defender. Now the back judge may have a good look at this from the hash marks and may need to assist here with DPI. If you throw and you are the away official, always confer with the covering official to confirm your call with him before reporting to the referee. The covering official may have something to add.

Blocking Below the Waist

Another reminder the when in shotgun or pistol, the ball is leaving the three yard zone at the snap and so blocking below the waist is illegal.

Protection for the Snapper

As we discussed in the pre-season meetings, there are new definitions for scrimmage kicks. A "punt" scrimmage kick formation is when the kicker is positioned 10 yards behind the snapper. The second scrimmage kick formation is the "field goal" scrimmage kick formation where the holder is positioned 7 yards or more behind the line with a knee on the ground in position to be the holder. A second player must be no more than three yards behind the holder in position to kick the ball. In these two formations the snapper has protection from a direct charge. There is not protection for the center when the offense is in shotgun or pistol.

Center Moving the Ball Forward During Adjustment

Umpires are not to let the center adjust the ball forward thus gaining unearned yardage. If flanks see this happening, they are to inform the umpire who is to inform the center of the problem and direct them to adjust his feet/stance to the ball before going down on the ball. Otherwise we have a snap infraction (5 yards).

"That's Not My Call"

Officials are to refrain from using this phrase as it never adequately answers the question that a head coach is asking. Usually a head coach is asking about a foul that he saw and assumes that you also saw it. His question is something like, "You saw that, why aren't you calling it." Saying that "it's not my call" tells the coach that you are more interested in just working your area

than you are officiating a fair game for the players. In most cases a sideline official's mechanics will not place him in good position to make a call across the field. The more accurate response is that you were "not in position to make that call" (usually quite far away from the foul). This is a more honest and accurate statement.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – When does a coach cross the line?

When a coach offers his opinion of the last call and it is not shared by the crew, live with it. A coach has the right to voice his opinion of the call. Where coaches cross the line is when they get personal with the official and refer to their character. That is where an unsportsmanlike penalty must be thrown. As long as they refer to the call and not the person, we're just expressing our opinion. Of course, persistent and prolonged abuse of the official can also be unsportsmanlike.

Getting the Ball Ready for Play

When a new series begins and the offensive team huddles at the sideline before going out to line up on the ball, flank officials should check to see if the center has relayed the ball in to the umpire or not. If not, get the ball from the center and get the ball in so the referee can mark the ball ready for play. Work with your team to keep the game tempo moving.

TD Scored by the Defense

When this occurs, we have the opponent's team ball in play for the PAT. Referees and flanks should look to the scoring team's bench to see if they are attempting to get their own ball to you. If so, help them with a slight delay. If not, then you must mark the opponent's ball ready for play.

After the Game Mechanics

We all know the rule, after the referee signals the end of the game; all five officials are to immediately leave the field together. Do not look for fans or coaches or engage in any form of conversations. Leave the field and save the "great game" comments and hand shakes for the locker room. Fans can easily mistake these gestures.

Finish the Game

JV game that is a 26-0 blowout with 2nd and 3rd teams on the field, we had a reported three holding fouls at this point in the game. Rule of thumb is let them play it out and finish the game. Only safety calls are necessary at this point.

False Start

When A's motion man turns up just before the ball is snapped this foul is a dead ball "false start" as opposed to live ball "illegal motion." Don't let it get away. Kill it. Flank official must ensure that they kill those dead ball fouls before the snap gets off. It's better to blow a whistle as the play starts than to have to negate a play because the dead ball fouls was not called prior to the snap.

No Catch

Receiver A1 goes up in the air to catch a ball, has it in his hands securely and lands with one foot and then lands on elbow where the ball is then jarred loose and rolling on the ground. No catch! If this occurs in the end zone, same result...No catch! The player must complete the catch by possessing the ball throughout the catching action. Hitting the ground is part of the action and the player must control the ball throughout the action.

What's the Foul?

Offense scores a touchdown and lines-up for the try. A has 10 players on the field, including 7 linemen, and is ready to snap. A11 comes running onto the field toward the end of the line-of-scrimmage when A snaps the ball. The try is blocked.

It is an **illegal shift**. "After a huddle or shift all 11 players of A shall come to an absolute stop and shall remain stationary simultaneously without movement of hands, feet, head or body for at least one second before the snap." It does not say that all 11 Players have to be in the huddle, it just says after a huddle. Illegal shift, live ball foul, the penalty would be declined and the result of the play is the try is no good.

Actually this could easily be a legal play if A11 would just stop and set for one second prior to the snap. As long as he's on his side of the ball and there are 7 on the line, it would be legal.

What if an interior lineman been running up to the line-of-scrimmage in the same circumstance? Ruling – Illegal Shift and illegal formation if they didn't already have 7 on the line!