

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: 11/2/2009
Re: **Weekly Bulletin #5**

Construction and Facilities

Hoover no longer has an entrance to the stadium from Highland Ave. Referees should enter the school via Chamoune Alley which is located just east of the school just before the Wienersnchitzel. Referees can park by the baseball field and have a short walk north to the stadium or the boy's locker room if they need to change. In addition, El Camino has no shower facilities for officials due to construction.

SDCFOA Evaluation Program – Officials Please Read and Comply

1. Please keep your evaluations current.
2. Evaluate your crew ONE TIME when your crew chief tells you to do so near the end of the year.
3. Evaluate everyone you work with on Thursdays.
4. Evaluate everyone you work with on Saturday's ONE TIME PER DAY.
5. NEVER rate an official N/A. If you work a three banger Pop Warner/ AYF rate each person ONLY ONCE. DO NOT rate or submit the official on the other two games.
6. If you happen to work with a crew member on a Thursday or Saturday you should rate him.
7. Read your evaluations and look for trends.
8. Remember that someone's evaluation of you is a snapshot view. None of us agree with all of our evaluations.
9. If you have any questions or concerns, call Bob Duggan

Use of Still Photos Not Allowed

Unlike the NFL and college, the use of any still photos or sideline cameras for coaching purposes is illegal (page 22 rule 1-6-1)

No Cutting in Shotgun or Pistol

Another reminder that when in shotgun or pistol, the ball is leaving the three yard zone at the snap and so blocking below the waist is illegal. Until we have video evidence of the ball not leaving the zone, we will continue with this State interpretation.

A11

The A11 was dependent on the use of the numbering exception in the "old" scrimmage kick formation. Some schools continue to spread the offense in what appears to be an A11, but what we actually have are 5 players on the line of scrimmage with numbers 50-79 and all other players with eligible numbers. The reported formation is legal. Bottom line, when using this old A11 formation, there is must be 5 players numbered 50-79 somewhere on the line of scrimmage and all eligible receivers must have legal numbers and be in a legal position. The snapper is not protected.

Knee Braces

This is a confusing rule to say the least. After speaking with the CA State Rules Interpreter, we know the following: All parts of the brace made of hard material and extending below the pants must be covered. Usually that covering consists of an elastic wrap or sock. Taping the hard material must be multiple layers to be considered a covering.

Picking by Receivers

Flanks and back judges need to continue to be alert for illegal picks by receivers who are running routes through the defensive backs or linebackers. Picks occur most frequently in the red zone or in important short yardage situations. Remember, picks are not to be confused with routes where a receiver curls into a space and occupies it, and then the DB runs into the receiver. Picks should be obvious to everyone.

Touchback or Down on the 1

It is a touchback when any free kick or scrimmage kick breaks the plane of the receiver's goal line. It does not matter if a player is in the end zone and touching the ball in the field of play. The only thing that matters is the ball relative to the plane of the goal line. If a kicker has half of his body in the end zone while he is downing the kick at the one, the ball has not broken the plane of the goal line so it is down at the one.

Halftime

Many teams go out on the field when the 15 halftime clock runs down and stand out there for the 3 minute warm-up period. For appearance purposes, the crew may have the flanks on the teams sidelines making sure the teams do not go out and line up for the kickoff until there are 30 seconds left in the 3 min warm-up period. It looks much more professional and we don't have kids and coaches standing around staring at us to start the game. Do not shorten the warm up period.

Keeping the Ball Dry

With the humidity increasing in the evening, footballs can become damp and slick from a combination of water and sweat. One of the pregame duties of the line judge is to locate and train ball boys from each team. Teams should recognize that it is in their best interest to have at least one ball boy working with the flank officials to keep a dry ball in play. On damp evenings, a dry ball can be substituted in on a regular basis. Umpires should always wear a towel, even on dry evenings.

Tight End out of the Box

With usual splits, the TE is not in the free blocking zone thus they are not eligible to block below the waist or clip. We had a team from out-of-town where the TE was cutting. Remember, the zone is 4-yards either side of the center...operationally defined with the help of our coaches as "tackle-to-tackle".

Catch – No Catch

A89 standing in the back of the end zone (9 yards deep in the end zone) leaps straight up and catches a pass airborne, then a B player pushes A89 where he first touches one foot out of bounds. It is the judgment of the covering official that A89 would have landed inbounds if not for the contact (push) by the B player. In high school, the ruling is touchdown. "Push-outs" are a part of the HS rulebook and an official can rule that a catch was going to be made if not for the "push-out" by a defender.

Finishing the Game

When the clock is clicking off the final seconds of the game (less than 25 seconds and no time outs) it is a good suggestion to allow/encourage teams to begin shaking hands to demonstrate that the game is over and to model good sportsmanship to the crowd. If a team is celebrating, try to direct the celebration to their own sideline or encourage them to stop and shake hands. Another suggestion is to allow the defense (losing team) to leave the field and return to their teammates. All of this is to avoid unsportsmanlike gestures and penalties.

Trick Plays and Deception

During a recent game, a kicker was approaching the ball as he intentionally tripped and fell flat on his face. Subsequently, the closest man to the kicker kicks an on-side kick. R who is caught up with the kicker's trip is not ready for the onside kick and the kickers recover the ball. This situation is similar to the "old bounce pass" where the ball is intentionally bounced backwards to the flank receiver to simulate an incomplete pass, whereby the receiver acts disgusted before taking off on the run with the legal backward pass. Both plays do not use a substitution, equipment or any coach's vocal directions to deceive so I am ruling this play legal. The officials on this game also ruled the play legal.

Proper Chains Mechanics

Now that the chains are operated back, away from the sideline, we need to instruct the chain crew to keep the chain parallel to the sideline so the coaches can get an accurate read on the line-to-gain. Apparently, one chain crew consistently had the forward stake a different distance from the sideline than the rear stake. It's a little thing that might make a difference to the coach across the field.

Flanks and Substitutions

During the game the referee counted only 10 offensive players. The referee acknowledges only 10 players to the QB who yells at the bench then turns to take the snap. As the ball is snapped the 11th offensive player appears as the lead blocker and makes a key block that lead to a score. As the 11th player came from behind the referee, he has no idea if the player ever stopped and set for one second. The defensive head coach was very sure he never stopped. The referee threw a late flag and called back the score, when he explained to the coach that the player never stopped he didn't argue. Bottom line, the flanks and back judge must be alert for all late substitutions.

Foul by Either Team following TD Scoring Play

The newly revised rule 8-2-4....If after a TD scoring play and prior to the initial ready for play signal for the PAT, either team commits any foul for which the basic spot is the succeeding spot, the offended team may have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or may choose to have the penalty enforced on the subsequent kick off. We've not had any problems with this new rule but someone pointed out that the Case Book situation 9.5.2 has not been updated and contradicts the rule. This is an old case book play so ignore it and continue to provide the offended team all of their options.

Visitor's Jersey Color

According to the rule book 1-5-1-c-4.....Players of the home team shall wear dark jerseys and players of the VISITING team shall wear light color jerseys. We've received reports of one team wearing dark orange jerseys as their away jersey. Unless both teams have agreed to this, it is clearly in violation of the rule. Please report any problems like this to me as we continue through the season. Congratulations to the crew who had this game for playing the game (what else could they do?)

Knee Pads

Reminder for officials and coaches about knee pads covering the knees... A number of receivers, backs and others are trying to play without their knees covered. Don't necessarily want to be the fashion police but coaches and training staff should emphasize legal equipment so we do not need to send players off the field.

Receivers Going Out-of-Bounds

Flanks are responsible for watching their receivers throughout the play and need to be especially alert when the receiver is close to the sideline. If a receiver steps out-of-bounds we need to know exactly why he went out. If the receiver went out on his own to avoid contact, then we have illegal participation. If there is contact between the receiver and the defensive back, then we have to make sure that the receiver is returning immediately at the first opportunity. Rule of thumb – please rule that when there is pushing back and forth between the receiver and the DB and the receiver steps out of bounds, that the receiver was blocked out of bounds – no illegal participation

Backs Cutting

Please be alert for backs cutting on pass protection. I've seen some film showing some nasty blocks-below-the-waist as the back steps up to take on the rushing defender. One of the blocks was on an inside tackle, so these blocks are not always on the outside rusher.

Comments to Coaches

We need to continue to closely monitor what we say to coaches from the locker room and pregame all the way through the end of the game and locker room. I have some reports of perceived negative statements from officials, and when asked about the comments, the report comes back that it was "all in fun" or the officials "never had any idea" that the coach was taking the situation in a negative way. I will continue to give specific feedback to officials as I hear them as we can all continue to improve in this area.....starting with me.

Failure to Communicate Leads to Key Turnover

As the QB is under pressure in his end zone, he flips the ball forward in a desperate manner. The referee stays with the QB as he should. He then approaches the crew when he finally gets to the ball and discovers that the defense is in possession at the bottom of a pile. Communication is hurried and sparse as the crew rules a turnover. Video shows that the flipped pass fell incomplete and the defense and offense, without any whistle or incomplete signal, dove for the ball in a scrum as if it were a fumble. We have to consider this a failure of our entire crew rather than one official. Someone needs to be a "crew saver" and step up on a play like this!

Team Box Markings

During your pregame, please check the team box markings. In two reported instances, at Santa Fe Christian and at Serra, the visiting team box has no markings, nothing for a restraining line and nothing at the 25 on the visitor's side only. These fields are marked illegally and it makes it hard to hold the visiting team as accountable when there are no lines other than the sideline. Maybe you could request something from the home team to improve the situation.