

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 #6

Purpose of These Bulletins (Reminder)

It is my purpose to provide important, relevant information to those listed above so that we might improve communication between all who are responsible for teaching and enforcing the rules of high school football. It is not my intention to embarrass or humiliate any official, coach, school, or player. If your play ends up in this bulletin, please accept that I continue to know that we are all giving our best effort each and every week. Thank you all!! But we must continue to learn from our mistakes using REAL examples each week. Thank you for not letting mistakes "get you down" but rather, using the mistake to ensure that IT NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN. So, here we go.....

Field Goal Mechanics

On field goals our umpire cannot assume a "normal" position. He must fade over to the side of the flank official that is under the goal post. We have a report where the umpire took the "normal" position and just prior to the snap, the offensive tackle on the side of the absent flank official, false started and was not picked up by the Umpire. This is a slight adjustment but a very important one.

Free Kick Out of Bounds

After a free kick goes out of bounds, the covering official should immediately get the OB spot and should not assume K is going to re-kick after the penalty or take the ball 25 yards beyond the previous spot. During a very lopsided game, a non-intentional short free kick went OB. The official threw a spectacular airborne flag, however, didn't get the spot. After the game he stated that he "knew" that R would want the penalty and re-kick. Don't assume anything in football.

Touch Back

Scrimmage kick goes over the head of the return man and goes through his hands (muff) and continues to bounce into the end zone. Remember that the force that put the ball in the end zone is the kick, not the muff. As soon as the ball breaks the plane of the end zone the ball should be blown dead and the touch back signal given by the back judge. If the muffed ball does not reach the end zone, then a recovery by the kicking team would give them possession at the spot of recovery (kickers cannot advance). If the ball were to be possessed by the receiver who then fumbles into the end zone, then we have a potential touchdown or touchback depending on who recovers as the receiver's fumble was the force that put the ball in the end zone. Back judges must review these different scenarios each and every pre-game (either in private preparation or in the crew's pre-game).

Communicating with Coaches

Here are a few ideas from Rich Kollen of the Mountain West that might help officials better communicate with coaches. Remember all good officials must have the ability to deal, and communicate, with coaches. There are many techniques, and the following are just some to consider:

- Deal with the coach's behavior first
- Be in control and speak in calm tones; NEVER yell at a coach
- Maintain positive and confident body language
- Make eye contact with the coach when the situation allows
- Answer only questions, not statements ("That's the worst call I've ever seen" does not need any answer from the official)
- Try to use football terms when talking to coaches (the rule book is your friend)
- DO NOT debate the coach

Freshman and Youth Games

Officials for youth and freshman football games are to arrive at the game site 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start to allow for a brief pregame and accomplishment of their pregame duties. All clock operators and chain crews should receive a thorough pregame briefing, including the ones who have "been doing this for many years."

Reminders to Officials

Flanks – Remember to bring a legal ball with you to the coin toss. And line judge has various timing responsibilities in 4 man games and, should have a watch capable of timing the play clock, timeouts, the one minute intermission following scores, etc.

Clock Operators and Chain Crews

We seem to be seeing more schools and Pop Warner programs where the clock operator and chain crew arrive a few minutes before kickoff. Obviously this leads to either an inadequate briefing, or a delay in starting the game. Either option isn't good. This situation is more common at the youth level, but it is now creeping into the frosh, JV and now, varsity games. The first crew member arriving at the school should inquire about the timer and chain crew to assist the school and insure that the game starts on time.

When is Roughing the Passer Not Roughing the Passer?

Last weekend we had a play where the referee had a flag for roughing the passer. Just after he signaled the penalty to the press box, the Head Linesman and Back Judge came to him and reported that the ball was thrown out of bounds and no receiver was in the vicinity. Knowing that "a passer is a player who throws a legal forward pass", we no longer had roughing the passer because we did not have a legal forward pass. The referee had the HL throw a flag to the spot where the ball was thrown from. At first the crew wanted to offset the penalties, but then the referee made the connection to the illegal pass cancelling the roughing the passer penalty. When this happens, I suggest you communicate to each coach personally that there is no longer a "roughing the passer" penalty and that the only penalty is for intentional grounding. It's a tough conversation when you have to tell the coach of the offense that he no longer has a 1st down and that he actually has lost 5 yards and a down.

Thank You for Your Cooperation Coaches

Crews are reporting that they are getting outstanding cooperation from the coaches throughout the County with the new restricted zone rule. This has been a huge adjustment issue and the crews are extremely appreciative of the cooperation of the coaches. Too often we miss an opportunity to provide a compliment.

Requests for a Running Clock

Please remember our mechanic, we only run the clock when both teams agree to a running clock. If one team requests or suggests a running clock, and the other coach does not want one, then no running clock. Remember, we are just the messenger. Do not appear persuasive or have an opinion. If you get caught in between the coaches in this situation you will lose!