

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 #9

Officials Are Guests of the Home Team

I am proud of our referees at youth game who are reinforcing good manners with some of our officials. Seems some officials are assuming that the home team snack bar is "obligated" to feed us and/or provide us beverages. In some cases our officials are late to perform their pre-game responsibilities because they are eating in the snack bar. One report even has an official walking into a snack bar and helping himself as the parents in the snack bar stood and watched in disbelief! Thank you, crew chiefs, for your complete understanding of how rude this behavior is. As guests, we can accept what is offered, but don't ask for anything. If you want a drink, be prepared to pay for it. If it is offered as a complimentary drink, please offer your thanks in return. Thank you crew chiefs for protecting our reputation and image in the community! Our parents taught us good manners for a reason.

Watching Ourselves on DVD

I spent some time this week with a crew chief that had just finished reviewing a DVD of his game. I also had a chance to see the DVD and saw some definite room for improvement in spite of being a very talented crew. What impressed me was the crew chief's honesty and intensity about his disappointment. I left the conversation with a feeling of pride in how seriously our crew chiefs take their leadership role. I also know that particular crew is going to fix their mistakes and develop into an even better crew.

Final Part of the Regular Season

We are now entering the final three weeks of the regular season and league championships are at stake. Our crews can expect the intensity to pick up and play to be even more emotional. We must be at our best and also raise our "game" to match these important contests. Remember, always keep your cool, be accurate in your descriptions to coaches by staying as close to the rule book as possible with your explanations and only throw your flag if you see the whole play and the illegal action is BIG.

Punt Play

The offense is in punt formation. The punter kicks the ball which is tipped behind the neutral zone (this is ignored by rule) and then goes beyond the neutral zone. The receivers attempt to catch the kick in flight when the ball is first batted/touched by the kickers while the ball is still in the air. The ball, while still in the air, hits the receiver and then goes to the ground and is recovered by a member of the kicking team. What do we have? First touching by K or Kick Catch Interference by K? or K's ball? The proper ruling is Fair Catch Interference (interfering with the opportunity to make a catch) which would result in an awarded fair catch for the receiving team at the spot of the foul, or a re-kick (we assume) 15 yards from previous spot. A third option for the receiving team would be the result of the play, but that would not be a good choice as the kicking team recovered the ball.

Contact between Receivers and Defenders

A coach asked me for clarification this week about contact or blocking that can occur between receivers and defenders. Let me cover the defense first – **The defense** may not "contact an eligible receiver who is no longer a potential blocker." In addition, the defender may not "interfere with an eligible opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch or bat the pass." This restriction for defense "begins when the ball leaves the passer's hand."

Now for the offense:

The restrictions for offense begin with the snap and the definition of OPI is the same as for defense above, so, eligible receivers may not push off even if the pass has not been thrown. As for blocking another player or the DB - that is a judgment call of whether the receiver is still a potential blocker. If not, it could be OPI.

Error on Dead Ball Encroachment Foul

If we have a dead ball encroachment on the defense, yet the flank officiates the play as if it were a live ball foul, we must bring this play back and enforce the dead ball foul as it was supposed to be done. It doesn't matter if the offense gained 25 yards, or even scored a TD, bring it back.

Blocking Below the Waist by the Defense

I received reports of defenders cutting the legs of pulling offensive linemen. If the action is clearly below the waist and the offensive lineman does not have a chance to see it coming, then the defense blocking below the waist is a foul. When this foul really occurs, it is ugly because the defender really CUTS the offensive lineman. We are not talking about a defender coming up and cowering down so they don't get killed by the stampede of 300lb. linemen. That is not blocking below the waist, that's survival!

Newer Officials and Their Mechanics

There seems to be two areas where our newer officials could improve, working without their whistles in their mouths throughout the play and footwork when moving the box on 2nd 3rd, and 4th downs. They are not using their down field foot and pivoting to move the box. This has been addressed numerous times in the first year class. I feel the whistle issue is an IW waiting to happen. I'd appreciate it if the Saturday Pop Warner referees could address these two issues with their younger officials.

Clean Hands

When you get a chance, take a look at 2009 Case Book 10.2.2#C: In this play, the offense fouls before a fumble that is recovered by the defense (the defense gets it with clean hands). Then the defense runs to the 1 yard line and is downed there. On the way the defense held at the 10 yard line. TIME HAS RUN OUT ON THE CLOCK IN THE 4TH QUARTER (and the defense is losing by a point). As long as the defense didn't commit their foul prior to gaining possession, the defense can decline the offense's penalty and retain possession. BUT, once that decision has been made, there is one more! The offense can accept or decline the penalty for the holding. If the offense declines the penalty, then there is no accepted penalty on the play. By rule the period ends! Game over! Please review all of the possibilities on change of possession and the "clean hands" rules enforcement.