**SAN DIEGO COUNTY FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION - THE WEEKLY BULL – October 11, 2023**

**Meeting This Week** – We will all be meeting at Mira Mesa High School at 7:00 pm.  Crew chiefs and instructors will meet at 6:00 pm.  Agenda will be: The Bull; Sharing of Interesting Plays; Calibration; and Instructional video.

**Please Check Your Attendance and Tests** – I think we’re doing very well overall.  If you do not have a test score on the attendance sheet, you will be provided a test to complete at this week’s meeting.  Make sure your score gets recorded on the attendance sheet.  You need to make nine (9) meeting which includes the Banquet, Position Clinics and In-Class Meetings.

**Board Elections** – There are five (5) individuals who have expressed interest in running for the Board.  They are (in alpha order): Don Clay; John Fowler; Glenn Inigo; Charlton Lynch; and Nathan Weiss.  Because there are less that eight (8) running, we will not require a primary election.  The final election will be done electronically and conducted by our Secretary, Ed Zapolski and our President, Matt Starr.  You can expect the voting to be done approximately two weeks from now.

**Service Anniversaries** – Please contact Rick Christensen if you have earned a service award: 1974 (50 years), 1984 (40 years), 1994 (30 years), and 2004 (20 years).

**Cancer Awareness Month** – Remember, pink whistles are the only allowable changes to our uniform in recognition of this important event.

**Foul Reports Analysis** – Robert Bezverkov continues to collect weekly foul reports and we will do some “deep dives” into the data at the end of the season.  Meanwhile crews are being provided their data and the foul data for each school.  One thing we can point out is that the average number of fouls per team is 7 fouls per game.  The average number of fouls per game for all crews is 14 per game.  This matches the average number of fouls per game at the NCAA level last year.

**Communication with Coaches** – This continues to be the biggest complaint from coaches…”The crew wouldn’t communicate with us!”  Each week you must re-commit to communicating with your head coach.  Can you give him some helpful information like the remaining number of timeouts, that the other team is “milking the clock” and going to take a time out, adjustments that need to be made to formations, etc.  Be helpful so that when you bring “bad news” you have a bit of a history with the coach, and it just might help.  At least the coaches think so!

**The 20th annual SDCFOA Golf Tournament**– This golf “adventure” benefits the SD Youth Football Fund and will take place on November 1 at the beautiful Admiral Baker Golf Course.  Tee time is 11:30am and the event is open to all football officials/guests and all skill levels.  Entry fee is $150 for all of the benefits or $125 for just golf.  Space is limited, so please go to [www.sdyouthfootballfund.org](https://click.pstmrk.it/3/www.sdyouthfootballfund.org//5f_U/-oawAQ/AQ/5b595730-1c2e-48fc-a7cc-302d4cadd709/1/Vgmr-y2z0S) and click on “Fundraisers” ASAP to sign up.  Singles are welcome…we’ll make sure you get paired-up.  We can also use donations for the 19th hole raffle.  Please contact Mike Downing, Mike Gunzelman, or Ed Blick if you have questions.

**Judging Forward Progress** - It has been said by officials far beyond my pay grade that one of the first things many head coaches assess is an official’s ability to judge progress.   The head coach knows a few times each game it will be critically important.  It is a skill we must strive to be exceptional at, and our movements on the field should show it.  In a similar way, an Umpire’s care and custody of spotting the ball should be equally important.  Our mannerisms and positioning in spotting the ball on the field will portray and show how serious we take this responsibility.

**Forward Progress and the Whistle** – From Mike Weseloh: “In our game last week we had a play where the runner was contacted and driven back, clearly his forward progress was stopped.  Both LOS officials did not rule on the play but agreed over radio contact that the forward progress was stopped.  Naturally the ball was subsequently fumbled and recovered by the defense.  Fortunately, it was a very one-sided game, and we were able to give the ball back to offense at the correct spot and move on.   In many cases in ruling progress, we must hit the whistle to stop play and SELL the call.   Must we be absolutely sure the runner has possession? YES, ABSOLUTELY.”

**Umpire Spotting the Ball** – Life is a circle and some of what we used to do is coming back!  There was a time when we marked the exact spot where progress was stopped, or the runner was down by rule.  Then we went away from that and started always marking the ball dead on a yardline stripe.  Now the NFL is going back to that old standard, that football is a game of inches, and every inch counts!  The NCAA is also emphasizing this standard and we too, are returning to marking the ball at the exact spot that the ball was judged to be dead.  So our umpires must be alert to placing/spotting the ball at the exact spot presented by the LOS officials.

**4th Down Incomplete Pass** – When this happens, the ball should be placed back at the original dead ball spot and the chains should be reset to the other side of the ball, properly marking, the now, front of the ball for the new series going the other way.  I know, it’s a little thing, but little things add up to big things.

**Equipment** – Players are now wearing long leggings with knee pads inserted.  The rule only states that knee pads are required equipment, it doesn’t state that knee pads must be worn inside the pants.  It requires that the knee pads must be worn over the knee and under the pants.  So, knee pads in leggings are legal as long as they are worn over the knee and under the pants.  And the pants must completely cover the knees.

**Counting Offense and Defense** –Primary responsibility for counting the offense lies with the Referee with back up by the Umpire.  Primary responsibility for counting the defense lies with the Back Judge with support from the Line Judge.  Every play!  If we miss even one, there is no explanation possible.  Be consistent.  Thank you.

**Flanks Pre-snap Signaling** – Remember we are signaling the location of the widest player on the LOS.  If the widest player on your side is a tight end, so be it, he is your widest receiver and would require no signal as he should be on the LOS.  You would just acknowledge the opposite flanks signal if he/she has one.

**Ball Mechanics** – I’m liking what I see from our umpires!  You are making your crews more effective and more professional looking with your hustle.  The game tempos have improved and our referees are more in charge of the tempo.  Thank you for your hustle and hard work umpires!!

**Back Judges – Stay Involved and Active** – Are you helping get the old ball out on all free kicks and punts?  This allows the umpire to focus on getting the new ball via the ball boys, flanks, or sideline (hopefully not the center or QB!).  BJ’s should also be involved in every major penalty by either holding a spot or covering a flag.  Every major penalty!

**Refreshments** – If you are thirsty at halftime of any game, be prepared to pay for your halftime refreshments.  They are not part of the game fee or our contract with the CIF or youth football.  So, PLEASE, don’t assume that you get refreshments.  Comments like, “Make sure it’s one of the cold Gatorades” can easily be interpreted as arrogant and demanding.  Remember, these funds are used to pay for school athletics and we are being offered something that is taking money from their profits.  Thank you!

**Clock Awareness** – We are doing much better as an association.  The quality of the timers provided to us does make a huge difference to the game, but we must continue to be vigilant in immediately checking the status of the clock right after signaling.  The covering official(s) may need to complete their dead ball officiating until the colors separate before also checking the status of the clock.  Keep up the great work!

**Food for Thought** – After a TD the Team A player taunts his opponent thus earning a UNS which Team B chooses to have assessed on the ensuing kickoff.  Then, on the following PAT, Team B roughs the kicker on the successful try.  What is the proper enforcement?  Both will be enforced on the ensuing kickoff and the yardage will offset.  The kickoff will be from the Team K 40-yard line.