**San Diego County Football Officials Association - THE WEEKLY BULL – September 6, 2023**

**No Meeting This Wednesday Sept. 6th** – Open up that rule book and read a rule and its related case book plays.

**Need to Take Your Mechanics and/or Rules Test?** – A test will be provided to you at the next meeting which will be Wednesday, September 13th.

**Towels** – Narrow towels must be at least 4” in width.  Measure your game card, some of them are exactly 4” and can help in being accurate in allowing a legal towel to be worn.

**Girls Flag Pilot** – Moving the Line Judge 7-yards downfield to manage the Rush Line seems to work well.  If you’d like to try this mechanic the Flag Committee is allowing its use.

**Equipment, Adornment & Face Paint**– I think we’re seeing a definite improvement and our coaches have been a great help.  Please remain consistent as we continue.  Remember, if a player is sent out for one play, they cannot be “bought back in” with a time out.  Out for one play same as helmet coming off, bleeding, or an injured player.

**Mouth Pieces** – Not wearing a mouth piece is not something that players generally do on purpose.  Reminding a player to wear his mouth piece, instead of sending him out for one play, is an acceptable enforcement.  Now if the player is wearing a mouthpiece, and has a second one dangling from his facemask, that is adornment and the player must be sent off for one play to remove it from his helmet.

**Trick Plays** – As you know they must be run perfectly.  Example #1:  As the team brings on the field goal team, one player slips from the mass of substitute players from the team bench directly to a position just beneath the numbers.  The player is never within the numbers following the ready for play.  We must be strict and penalize this Illegal Formation.  Example #2: On 3rd and short, the offense attempts a hard-count to draw the defense offside.  It doesn’t work so the offensive linemen, who have had their hand on or near the ground, rise up from the down position to look to the sideline for the play signal.  This is a trick play, so the technical false start must be enforced.

**Freeway Closure** - I-5 South will be closed all weekend from 9 PM on Friday 9/8 to early Monday morning. Closure will be from I-8 to the 163 bridge. Anyone trying to get home on Friday night or to and from games on Saturday at any level will need to make a major detour.

**Back Judges and Kickoff Mechanics** - Do not permit the kicker to bring the ball into the game for Kickoffs.  The Crew must have a consistent Mechanic to get the kicking ball in the hands of the Back Judge. Do not hand the ball to the kicker until there are 11 players in formation for the Receiving Team and Kicking Team.  Do not march off penalties enforced on Kickoffs.  Go to the spot resulting from the enforced Penalty and Signal the Foul being enforced.

**Counting Players** – Reminder, there is absolutely no excuse for missing the counting of the offense or defense.  It must be accurately completed each and every play!

**Flanks Closing When Necessary** – Our observers have seen flanks who could have closed with more purpose and intensity on scoring, and/or line to gain calls.  This serves as a reminder that your urgency on these situations does help sell the accuracy of the spot and greatly increases confidence in the crew!

**Transitions** – The expectation is that the one-minute transitions be completed in one minute or less.  So far, observers are commenting positively on our crews’ efforts.  Keep up the intensity.

**Keys to Great Enforcements** – 1) The foul information must come quickly, smoothly and completely from the calling official to the referee.  2) The referee must process the nature of the foul and the game situation to determine if the coach needs to be consulted.  If not, provide the umpire with the basics of the enforcement.  3) Referee leaves umpire, HL and LJ to do their thing…while signaling and moving to the new position. 4) The crew must be ready with the clock status when the referee faces the crew.

**Injuries on the Field**  - If you are in the area of the injured player and an official’s time out has been taken, pause and stay with the athlete until help arrives.  Just a nice thing to do for an athlete in pain.  If you have information that may help the trainer determine the nature of the injury you should offer the info to him/her. It’s just common sense and helpful to the athlete and the trainer. If we decide to declare an official’s time out for injury, then only an outside the 9-yard mark conference may be held.  The coach may not come on the field and meet with his team in the huddle….team must go to the sideline and then any number of coaches can come on the field and meet with individuals or groups or the whole team (just like normal).  Again, only if the referee has granted an official’s time out!  PLEASE, have the teams back on the field and ready to play when the injured player is safely off the field.  Prompt resumption of play is critical to the overall game tempo.

**Coaches Assisting with Difficult Situations** – It is generally appreciated when the officials seek the coach’s assistance when working with one of his players who is losing his composure on the field.  Coaches may ask that you watch a particular player on the other team, but they will still help with controlling their own player.  It is important that we get information to coaches when we’ve warned a player so they can follow up with the player and understand that we’ve already warned him.

**Ejections So Far** – The players in San Diego are doing very well so far – I hope I’m not jinxing it!  We also must be complimented for working well with players and coaches to prevent problems and help our athletes.  We’ve had several ejections at the JV level but only a few at the varsity level.  Fingers crossed!

**Keep Your Sidelines Clear But Your Focus on the Field** – We’re doing an outstanding job of keeping the sidelines safe for ourselves and for coaches and non-players.  This is an important portion of your pre-snap routine, but less so when we get into the Red Zone.  Remember, we must be fully present and ready to officiate the next play.  If we’re fixated on the status of the team box, maybe we’re not ready for the snap?

**Observer Program** – By the end of week #5 9/15 we will have seen every crew.  Great job observers and I’ll continue to include their observations into these Bulls which are getting a bit lengthy - LOL

**Forward/Backward and Complete/Incomplete Passes** – We continue to be challenged with these new offensive schemes.  Properly ruling on quick and delayed passes to the flanks from shotgun creates a situation where the line of scrimmage officials must immediately judge forward or backward.  We are now signaling with our arm the direction of the pass.  The “off official” is responsible for signaling forward or backward.  If the “near official” does not get help, he/she must make the call and signal accordingly.  When in question, the ball is forward.

**Food For Thought** - 1/10 at B’s 40 yd line.  A26 does a jet sweep to the right side and runs to B’s 35 where A26 fumbles.  A76 attempts to pick it up but bobbles it backwards to B39 yd line.  B58 tried to recover by diving at the ball but his helmet accidentally bounces the ball back toward A’s goal line and it goes out of bounds at A’s 45.  What’s the down and distance for the next play from scrimmage?