**San Diego County Football Officials Association - Weekly Bulletin *Flag Football* 10/2/24**

**Spandex and Compression Shorts** – The rules state that spandex and compression shorts may be worn under the uniform, but in checking with our Rules Interpreter, it was clarified that the players may wear these as their uniform shorts.  Quite a few are doing that now.

**Breast Cancer Awareness Month** – As always, the San Diego County Football Officials Association will fully support teams who wish to recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month by wearing pink on their uniforms or in any other manner which properly raises awareness of this important cause.

**The following are reminders and clarifying interpretations from MayAnn Menlove the CA State Rules Interpreter for Flag Football.  She recently sent this list of topics and rules interpretations to you all of the Southern Section Schools (CFOA) and to us in San Diego to use as we see fit.  We shall follow the CFOA and our State Rules Interpreter in the San Diego Section.**

**Arrival Time** - All officials are required to be on the field 30 minutes prior to the start of the game.

**Pre-Game Flag and Football Inspection** - Before the game, officials should inspect the footballs that will be used; ensure the flag belts are worn correctly (snug and around the waist, not the hips) and are legal; and that the field is set up correctly and is safe.   All flags will be checked by the officials prior to the start of the game to ensure that players are wearing their flag belt correctly prior to taking the field.  It is acceptable to do this during warm-ups and not require a line up for pregame equipment checks. CFOA intended that Flag Football have pregame equipment checks like the pregame checks that are done in tackle football.

**Footballs** - Until there is an official ball for CIF or NFHS the football used needs to be of the size outlined in the CIF rule book.  Size of the ball supersedes the label on the ball.  For example, there is an NFL football that says Junior (not Youth or Intermediate as the rule book dictates), but is the correct size. There are other footballs that say Junior and are not the correct size. We understand that officials do not take measuring devices on the field with them.  This does not mean that you do not inspect the footballs to ensure that they are legal and properly inflated. It is part of the officials’ job to ensure that all equipment that enters the game is legal and when it is found to be illegal, it is removed from the game.  Both schools can play with the same ball if one team does not have a ball that the officials deem to be legal. When a coach is questioning the legality of a piece of equipment, officials should inspect that piece of equipment immediately and remove it if necessary.  When a rule cannot be found in the CIF Flag Football Rule book, but is addressed in the NFHS Football Rule Book, the directive is to follow NFHS.  A properly inflated football is a perfect example of this.

**Jewelry**- This should not still be an issue.  Jewelry is never allowed, unless it is a religious medallion or medical alert, taped and worn under the clothing.  Medallions worn in this way are the only type of religious jewelry that is legal by the CIF Rule Book.  Ours is not the only sport of have this type of rule.  This is yet another reason pregame equipment checks are critical to address these issues prior to the game.

**Penalty Enforcements**– It is the intention of CIF to keep penalty enforcements as similar to NFHS Tackle as possible.  Flag Football may have different yardage for the penalty, but the enforcement spots *can and should remain similar*.  We see this in fouls by A beyond the LOS, enforced from the spot of the foul.  We also see this in fouls by B on scoring plays.  Fouls by B on scoring plays will be enforced on the Try or the “KICKOFF”.  We do not actually have a kickoff, so the foul will be enforced from the 20-yard line where B will take possession.  The line to gain is not set until the penalty is enforced, therefore, it would be 1st and 5 or 1st and 10 after the enforcement of the penalty when B takes possession.

**Illegal Contact and Flagrant Fouls** - While our rule book is not as clear on other fouls such as Personal Fouls, we can assume that an illegal contact foul would fall under the classification of Personal Foul.  Even in NFHS tackle, personal fouls do not include an automatic first down. When contact is deemed flagrant, a flagrant foul should be called and a possible ejection of the player committing the foul.  A Flagrant Foul is a foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury.  In other words, don't wait for an injury to occur for a Flagrant Foul to be called.  Unlike our Tackle Football game, players in Flag Football are NOT wearing any protective equipment except a tooth guard.  Contact towards the head or neck area is dangerous and the players must be protected. If officials feel the contact did not warrant the level of it being a Flagrant Foul, then an Unsportsmanlike Like Conduct Foul should be assessed against the offending player.  The goal is to remove all forcible contact from Flag Football.
contest by any individual player or coach results in an ejection from the contest.  We are seeing more and more “Forcible Contact” fouls that need to be called as Flagrant or UNS.  We have been hearing that coaches are teaching that they are “okay with the contact foul” because the penalty is not severe.  For example, contact to the head and neck of the passer, repeatedly during a contest.  The first of these may be Roughing the Passer, but if the team or player continually commit the same foul, you may need to have an Unsportsmanlike or Flagrant Foul instead.

**Sidelines** - We have seen an uptick in coaches coming on to the field of play.  Sometimes to call in a play and sometimes to speak with, or get closer to the R.  A coach entering the field of play more than a step or two should be a 10-yard Sideline Infraction Penalty.  Some coaches don’t realize they are not allowed to do this. What that tells us is that officials have not been enforcing this as a penalty.  You have an option to issue a warning on the first offense and the second being a 5-yard penalty.  Officials need to be calling this foul. 