THE WEEKLY BULL – Sept. 16, 2015

**Need a Make Up Test?** – Although there are no meetings this week, I will be at West Hills tonight (Tuesday) in Room B1 if you’re in the area and want to make up a rules or mechanics test. Otherwise, you’ll have me make it up on a regular meeting night or at the Wed. October 28th make up meeting for attendance and tests.

**Reminder from Tom** - If your calendar has a light blue box, you can no longer block that day. You have to call me to remove you from the game (no penalty).

**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.

**Showing IPad to Officials** – We are not allowed, by rule, to view or use any video in regards to plays that occur. Coaches offering us the opportunity to view a play on an IPad should be respectfully declined.

**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.

**Equipment Time Outs** - We do have equipment time-outs in high school (25 seconds). This should be enough time for a player to adjust pads, put his shoe back on, or repairing an ear pad in his helmet. This 25 second official’s time out can happen even as the ball is ready to be snapped. If we or the player discovers an equipment problem right before the snap we can/should stop the clock and provide time for the repair. If the repair takes more than 25 seconds then the player must go out and play continues.  
  
**Proper Use of the Whistle** - It appears the "toot" of the whistle (sometimes referred to as the “funny whistle” is being used in place of the real whistle. If you’re going to blow your whistle, BLOW IT! The “funny whistle” or toot of the whistle is just used to get the attention of your fellow official(s) if there is an important or emergency need to get their attention.

**Observer Program** – Our observers have now observed 19 of the 36 crews as of the end of week 3. By this weekend it will be 22 of 36 crews.

**Observer Feedback** – Continue to work on cross-field mechanics and how we can use them to benefit our spots. When flanks work together and trust each other, cross field mechanics can improve the work of both flanks. You two are a team within the crew!!! Look for “push backs” or plays where the HL or LJ is trailing the play because of a crowd of players at the sideline. Help each other on sacks of the QB.

Good signal communication throughout the game is a must! Make sure that we are always giving STRONG, CLEAR, CONFIDENT signals. Signals are a key part of the communication process with the crew, coaches, players, and fans. We must sell the fact that we are in total control of the game with STRONG, CLEAR, CONFIDENT SIGNALS!

Spots, spots, spots – Continue to focus on good, accurate spots. Hustle to the progress spot, remember to be generous as it tends to make us more accurate, and square off. Move on to the field and close as far as is necessary (numbers? To the hash?)

Make Your Calls BIG – Observers are also getting a chance to review video of the game they observed just like the crew. We’re seeing some DPI and OPI calls that do not show up BIG on film. If they are not BIG on film, logic tells us the restriction was not that big. You cannot build a reputation as an outstanding official by splitting hairs on these important calls. You will be wrong just as many times as you’ll be correct. That’s 50% correct – a horrible success rate! Make them BIG!

Every penalty enforcement is an opportunity to show how professional our crew is. When we provide wrong/partial information to the referee or stumble with the enforcement process the fans and coaches question our overall abilities. Make efficient penalty enforcement the highest of priorities on your crew!

**Free Blocking Zone Revisited** - I am aware that the other area like LA, Orange County and Las Vegas are allowing the cutting in shotgun if the linemen are in a 3 or 4 point stance.  We do not. **We Follow The Rule** which states - The Free Blocking Zone (FBZ) is 4 yards lateral of the ball in each direction and 3 yards deep into the offensive and defensive backfields.  So it is an 8 yard by 6 yard box or zone with the ball in the center of the zone.  We (coaches and officials) better define that yardage as tackle to tackle unless there are NO SPLITS in which case the tight end is also in the zone.  For a legal block below the waist to occur (including when the QB is in shotgun) the following conditions must be met:

* Both players must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap
* Both players must be in the free blocking zone at the snap
* The block must be in the zone
* The ball must be in the zone.

That last item about the ball being in the zone is the tricky part.  In San Diego we have watch a lot of video on this play and found that in fact the ball leaves the zone almost immediately.  We have never seen a play on Hudl where the block is initiated before the snap has left the zone.  It doesn't matter if the lineman was in a 3 point, 4 point or 2 point stance.  The ball is snapped and out of the zone that quickly. Sorry you have to deal with the interpretations by other counties and states but we are just following the rule!!!!

**Fair Catch Signal and the “Get Away” Signal** - Any waving signal, above the shoulders of the signaling player, that does not meet the requirements of a legal fair catch signal, is an invalid signal.  The "get away signal" is a legal act as long as it is not given above the shoulder of the signaling player.  There is no penalty for the receivers advancing a possessed kick following a "get away signal."  As a practical matter if we see a "get away signal" that is rising to the shoulder area of the signaling player, it is appropriate to warn both the player and the Head Coach. Do not go looking for problems!

**Writing Down Game Information** – Be a great crew! Everyone records all game information at all times (coin toss, time outs, unsportsmanlike penalty info, players who’ve disqualified themselves, and of course information on quarter changes). This is the standard and great crews make it a point to get this accomplished consistently!

**Tim Podraza and Jeff Phillips Crew on TV** - Here is the link for the video of last week's coverage at Scripps Ranch.  Well done Tim and thank you for your supportive comments Coach Engle from Scripps Ranch!  
   
<http://www.sandiego6.com/news/local/Two-Texas-high-school-football-players-who-struck-a-referee-during-a-game-have-been-temporarily-moved-to-an-alternative-school-as-investigations-continue-326938831.html?m=y&smobile=y&clmob=y&c=n>