

Welcome back football officials! It’s hard to believe that we are back on the field. The NHSOA welcomes you back for another great year of officiating Nebraska High School Football! The NHSOA is in its fourth season with football. This has been a great year for the NHSOA with record numbers attending the NSAA/NHSOA football clinics in the month of August. With a few rule changes and a big concentration on Points of Emphasis again we want to continue to keep everyone informed. We will continue to send out a monthly newsletter called “From the Crows Nest” to keep on top of items that are happening and being observed across the state.

The NHSOA would like to thank all of the officials that attended one of the sponsored NHSOA/NSAA football clinics. We once again had a great turnout at each of the 5 clinics that were held across the state as we were over to 200 officials. If you are not a member you can become one by completing the NHSOA membership application form that was included in your football packet from the NSAA. We have a few items that we need to clarify for you members. Please be sure to attach your NHSOA patch on the left shirt sleeve approximately an inch above the hem on a short sleeve shirt. On a long sleeve shirt please place it in the same position that it would be on a short sleeve shirt.

Also, once again please utilize the Cliff Keen National Alliance Program. The NHSOA and NSAA have signed a contract with them to offer wholesale pricing on officiating apparel to the members of the association. Please log on to www.nhsoahome.org to obtain the account number for Cliff Keen. Last but not least go out and have a great season and feel free to contact any of the NHSOA football committee members if you have a scenario or just a weird situation that you feel should go into next month newsletter that everyone can learn from.

2014 NHSOA/NSAA Football Clinics

August 16 – Kearney HS (District 4)

August 16 – Buell Stadium (District 2)

August 16 – North Platte High School (District 5 & 6)

August 22 – Wayne HS (District 3)

August 23 – Seacrest Field (District 1)

1st Quarter

Please make sure that your crew goes through a pre-game. We cannot stress this enough. Don’t be confident that your crew is all on the same page. This can and will eliminate problems or circumstances that may arise in the game. The pre-game is especially important before the first game of the season since everyone involved, your crew, coaches and the teams you are officiating, are all participating in something that they haven’t done in a while. Stop and think how many head or assistant coaches have read the rules book or case book this year! Make sure you and your crew has! Communication amongst your crew is a must along with coaches, players and site personnel. There is a pre-game sheet on the NHSOA and NSAA website that can be downloaded for you and your crew. Professionalism is needed from the time you walk on the field until the time you leave after the clock has expired. The biggest challenge officials have is to maintain focus for the entire game. It is best to use time outs and quarter changes as a time to get together and ensure that the crew’s concentration is at a high level. Another great tool to use is the football crew evaluation form that the NSAA observers if they are to come and evaluate your crew. This can be found on your NSAA home page under “Evaluation’s”.

Conducting a post-game is also very important. It is a perfect time to evaluate yourself and your crew members. For example crews can breakdown plays, scenarios and situations that arose during the game. Face it, we will make some mistakes on the field, but by mentally preparing yourself with a pre and post-game we can eliminate a lot of mistakes. We all want to become better officials, and by challenging yourself each night you work to try to improve on one part of your game you can accomplish this goal!

Coin Toss Reminders

No changes have been made from last year but please review.

One thing that we would like to stress when you are bringing your respective captains to the R prior to the toss please take the time and find out who your speaking captain is and place him so when you meet up with the R there is no switching of players. Also try to bring your captains to the sideline first and then walk in all together. We don't want you and the players taking a short cut across the field. Try to handle this all with straight lines. Image and professionalism is key!

Toss should be held off the field press box side around midfield unless noise warrants moving down the sideline get toss done as early as possible---@ least before 20 minute mark.

Have captains with backs to their respective sidelines, position so the speaking captains "captains that will make the decisions" next to the R.

The referee should allow all captains to view both sides of the coin, identifying which side is heads and which is tails. Let captains know the coin will be caught in the air, if dropped, the toss should be repeated.

The visiting captain is instructed to call heads or tails before the coin is flipped.

The umpire repeats the captain's choice loud enough for all captains to hear. If at any time during the toss referee errs or gives incorrect information, the umpire should speak up immediately.

Place hand on the shoulder of captain who won the toss. The winner is offered his choice. Offer the winning captain, "Defer" "Receive" "Defend a Goal" in that order. The order is the most likely selection and omits "kick".

If the choice is to defer, the referee steps out faces the press box and gives signal #10 twice. If the winner defers, continue the preventive approach by saying to the opposing captain "I take it you want the ball" once opposing team makes selection give remaining options to deferring captain.

Once final selections are made, the captains are asked to put their backs to the goal-line their team will defend and the referee gives the appropriate signal. If the choice is to Kick or receive only the first selection is signaled. If the choice was to defend a goal, two signals are given: pointing both arms toward the goal-line being defended, followed by the appropriate signal for the other captain.

2nd Quarter

2014 NSAA Football Officials Points of Emphasis

Communication

Proper communication with the coaches and players is paramount to establishing and maintaining a professional environment throughout the game. Inform the head coaches during

your pregame meeting how you intend to communicate with them as well as with their players. Wing officials give clear and concise details to the coach when explaining penalty enforcement. A healthy line of communication before and during the game will also assist with preventative officiating.

Communication within your crew is also vital to a successful game. Some of your most important officiating takes place between plays and just before the snap. Using the proper hand signals and verbal communication will minimize the potential for error. Take the time to come together as a crew and discuss penalty enforcement when facing unique situations.

Establishing the Line of Scrimmage (Wing Officials)

Indicate the LOS with your foot nearest the offense and let the receiver align accordingly. Be concise with your communication. "I have you on" or "I have you off". It is the receiver's responsibility to know whether he should be on the line or off.

Ejections

Before making the decision to eject a player be sure you saw the action clearly and take the time to discuss the situation with another crew member. There is not an appeals process for ejections, so it is important that we get it right.

Goal Line Officiating

Wing Officials – When the line of scrimmage is between 10 yard line and the 5 yard line, release slowly and stay ahead of the runner to the goal line. When the line of scrimmage is inside the 5 yard line, release to goal line and officiate back to the ball.

Only the official who actually sees the touchdown should give touchdown signal. Officials not observing the touchdown should not mirror signal.

Halftime

Preventing Heat Illness:

Working in the heat at the beginning of the season is a factor we all must deal with together. Players, coaches, trainers, on-site personnel and officials alike all have to be on the same page.

This past summer has given some high temps and as an official we also need to monitor this with the players on the field. During the game we need to make use of the intervals following a score, after a change of possession, and between periods. Communicate with the coaches and training personnel to make sure the players are getting a needed break. By taking advantage of these routine intervals, the flow of the game can be more closely maintained. No specific advantage is gained or lost. Refreshed, hydrated players on the field make for a better contest for all involved. Recognize the signs of a player possibly developing heat illness symptoms and communicate that with his team, coaches and/or training personnel. Don't take a chance with this highly dangerous and largely preventable illness.

On another note, let's visit briefly the rules about lightning: The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a default policy to those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests based on the presence of lightning. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy

3rd Quarter

Rule Changes:

Make every attempt to go over these new rule changes. We have all officiated a game where some of the most unexpected things have occurred. It is up to you to know the rules! Don't count on your partners to bail you out.

GAME OFFICIALS AUTHORITY (1-1-7): Due to teams being on the field earlier than 30 minutes prior to the game, state associations can require game officials to be on the field for pre-game responsibilities more than 30 minutes prior to game time. This change extends the game officials authority in those states.

TARGETING DEFINITION AND FOUL ADDED (2-20-2 NEW; 9-4-3m NEW): Continuing with the focus on risk minimization, the committee determined that taking aim at an opponent with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulder, to initiate contact above the shoulders with an intent that goes beyond making a legal tackle, a legal block or playing the ball is prohibited. Furthermore, the committee feels it is important to separate and draw specific attention to this illegal act.

ILLEGAL KICK CLARIFIED (2-24-9): The committee clarified the intent of an illegal kick. When an illegal kick occurs, the loose ball retains the same status that it had prior to the illegal kick.

DEFINITION OF DEFENSELESS PLAYER ADDED (2-32-16 NEW; 9-4-3i(3)): The committee added the definition of a defenseless player in an attempt to continue concentrating on risk minimization. A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury.

END-OF-PERIOD PROCEDURE CHANGED (3-3-3, 4): This rule changes the procedure of determining when to extend a period with an untimed down. In order to extend a period with an untimed down, time must expire during the down.

PROVISIONS TO FREE-KICK FORMATIONS ADDED (6-1-3b, c NEW): Two new provisions were added to adjust the free kick. One provision balances the kicking team's formation and the other limits the maximum distance of the run-up for the kicking team.

CLARIFICATION OF CREATING A NEW FORCE (8-5-1b NEW): This rule change clarifies that a new force is not created when a player is blocked into the ball.

ROUGHING-THE-PASSER FOULS REVISED (9-4-4): Roughing-the-passer fouls now include all illegal personal contact fouls listed in Rule 9-4-3. These fouls against the passer now result in an automatic first down in addition to a 15-yard penalty.

4th Quarter

We will leave the last quarter for some final comments from the NSAA office from Nate Neuhaus, Assistant Director " I hope you all enjoyed the summer and are now prepared for the start of the 2014 Football Season. It is important that you take the time to refresh your knowledge of past rules as well as become familiar with the new rule changes, mechanics changes and interpretations. All this information is been posted to the "DOWNLOADS" section of your login page".

"I am happy to report that we had a total of over 200 officials attend the NHSOA / NSAA Football Officials Clinics this year. I want to thank each and every one of you in attendance for coming. If you were unable to attend a clinic this year, I encourage you to do so next summer. It is a valuable experience."

"The game of football is constantly changing and evolving. The heightened focus on player safety and risk minimization has changed the way in which the game is coached, played and officiated. The health and safety of our student-athletes must be the number one priority to ensure that we keep those Friday Night Lights burning each and every week this fall and in the years to come. As officials we play a vital

role in the preservation of high school football which is an important and longstanding American tradition. I express my deepest gratitude for the time and effort you have dedicated to the NSAA and our member schools.”

Please contact me with any questions or concerns throughout the season.

Good luck and have fun!

Nate Neuhaus

We hope that you find the newsletter full of some valuable information, but most importantly it does not have all the answers. With that said please pass on any suggestions or ideas to your committee member in your district. Last but not least go out and enjoy your fall, work hard and most importantly have fun. Talk to you next month “From The Crow’s Nest”!

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