

# 2012 Football Preseason Bulletin

Rules, Revisions, and Interpretations



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## 2012 NFHS FOOTBALL CHANGES

**Rules 1-2-3h, 1-2-3l, (NEW)** Restrictions have been removed for corporate advertising and markings on the field of play.

**Rule 1-5-2b** Football gloves must meet the NOCSAE test standard starting in 2013.

**Rules 1-5-3c(8) (NEW)** Play cards must be worn on the wrist.

**Rule 2-3-7** Blocking-below-the-waist rules revised.

**Rule 2-4-1** Definition of a catch revised.

**Rule 3-5-10d** Player required to be removed if helmet comes off during the down.

**Rule 9-3-8 (NEW)** Restrictions added to blocking on free kicks.

**Rule 9-4-3h** Illegal personal contact penalty has been revised.

## 2012 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

### CONCUSSIONS, CONTACT TO AND WITH THE HELMET, HELMET TECHNOLOGY AND PROPER HELMET FITTING:

Once again, the NFHS Football Rules Committee has chosen to emphasize the head and helmet as a point of emphasis for the 2012 season. Concerns continue about 1) concussion and the risks of initiating contact with and to the helmet; 2) contact initiated above the shoulders, particularly contact to the helmet, both by the person receiving the contact, and the person delivering the contact; and 3) proper helmet fitting. Game officials, coaches, administrators and players involved in the game must continue to be diligent as it relates to all of these aspects.

**Concussions:** Concussions continue to be a focus of attention in football at all levels of competition. The NFHS has been at the forefront of national sports organizations in emphasizing the importance of concussion education, recognition and proper management.

Discussion of proper concussion management at all levels of play in all sports has led to the adoption of rules changes and concussion-specific policies by multiple athletic organizations, state associations and school districts. Coaches and game officials need to become familiar with the signs and symptoms of a concussed athlete so that appropriate steps can be taken to safeguard the health and safety of participants.

**2012 POINTS OF EMPHASIS (cont'd)**

Athletes must know that they should never try to "tough out" a suspected concussion. Teammates, parents and coaches should never encourage an athlete to "play through" the symptoms of a concussion. In addition, there should never be an attribution of bravery associated with athletes who play despite having concussion signs or symptoms. The risks of such behavior must be emphasized to all members of the team, as well as all coaches and parents. If an athlete returns to activity before being fully healed from an initial concussion, the athlete is at an increased risk for a repeat concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain has a chance to recover from the first can slow recovery or increase the chance for long-term problems. In rare cases, a repeat concussion can result in severe swelling and bleeding in the brain that can be fatal. Governing bodies at all levels of play continue to review and revise playing rules and encourage practices that decrease the risk of concussion. Among the most concerning data from the past several high school football seasons is that concussions continue to account for a high percentage of the injuries reported and that more than half of all concussions were a direct result of helmet-to-helmet contact!

All coaches should undergo education and utilize available professional development tools regarding the signs and symptoms of concussion and the proper management of athletes with a suspected concussion. The NFHS offers the free course "Concussion in Sports: What You Need to Know" that is available at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com). The free course is a brief and user-friendly resource not just for coaches, but also for students, parents and other interested persons. Many states have developed their own education programs. It is incumbent upon coaches to lead by example in recognizing the seriousness of all suspected concussions.

**Contact to and with the Helmet:** Over the years, the NFHS Football Rules Committee has repeatedly emphasized the need to KEEP THE HEAD OUT OF FOOTBALL because of the potential for catastrophic head and neck injuries. The committee in its publications for review by coaches and game officials - has specifically targeted some form of helmet review or illegal helmet contact emphasis 24 times since 1980. In the past few years, all levels of football have increased the focus on decreasing the risk of concussion, and it is widely conceded that one of the biggest steps in this effort is to eliminate direct helmet-to-helmet contact and any other contact both with and to the helmet.

Any initiation of contact with the helmet is illegal; therefore, there must be a focus on enforcing the existing rules. These rules include fouls such as butt blocking, face tackling and spearing (all of which are illegal helmet contact fouls) as well as other acts prohibited by the provisions regarding unnecessary roughness. These types of contact, such as blows to the head by the defender, initiating contact to the head, and helmet-to-helmet contact are all unnecessary to the playing of the game. When in doubt, contact to or with the helmet should be ruled a foul by game officials.

**Helmet Technology and Proper Helmet Fitting:**

The heightened concern about concussions and the variety of football helmets available have led participants and coaches to seek a helmet that they believe will best protect a player from concussion. While many new football helmets incorporate innovative materials and designs, no existing football helmet is "concussion proof." Therefore, it is incumbent upon athletic administrators, coaches, game officials, parents and participants to understand the limitations of all protective equipment, including the helmet. Everyone must realize that a combination of best practices, including but not limited to, repeated instruction on proper tackling and blocking techniques, proper helmet fitting and equipment

## 2012 POINTS OF EMPHASIS (cont'd)

tracking/recertification procedures, and proper and consistent officiating, are the keys to limiting injury risk and must be emphasized within each program.

Proper helmet fit has been a concern in recent years as anecdotal and documented reports of players having helmets completely dislodged during games continue to mount. To emphasize this point, the NFHS Football Rules Committee has passed a rule for the 2012 season that will require the athlete to leave the game for a single play if the helmet comes off during live ball action, unless the removal is due to a foul by the defense. If no foul is called, then the player must be removed. It is imperative that the athletes take an active role in the proper fitting, wear and use of the helmet and realize the "comfort" shortcuts are not permitted.

Every football helmet manufacturer provides various helmet-fitting pamphlets with each helmet sold, detailing how to properly fit the helmet. If the helmet-fitting pamphlets or other football helmet-related instructions are missing, please contact the respective football helmet manufacturer.

### HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION AND PREVENTING HEAT ILLNESS

Exertional Heatstroke (EHS) is the leading cause of preventable death in high school athletics. Athletes participating in high-intensity, long-duration or repeated same-day practices during the summer months or other hot-weather days pose the greatest risk. Football has received the most attention because of the number and severity of exertional heat illnesses. Notably, the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research reports that 35 high school football players died of EHS between 1995 and 2010. EHS also results in thousands of emergency room visits and hospitalizations throughout the nation each year.

In the spring of 2012, the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) will release a new position statement "Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention." The position statement is intended to provide an outline of "Fundamentals" and may be used as a guiding document by member state associations. Also, the NFHS will release a 20-minute free online course "A Guide to Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention" at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) regarding this life-threatening topic. Further and more detailed information will be found within the NFHS online course, as well as the 4th Edition of the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook, the NFHS SMAC position statement "Recommendations for Hydration to Minimize the Risk for Dehydration and Heat Illness" and other resources.

The new position statement and online course are intended to reduce the risk and incidence of EHS and the resulting deaths and injuries. The NFHS recognizes that various states and regions of the country have unique climates and an assortment of resources, and that there is no "one-size-fits-all" optimal acclimatization plan. However, the NFHS and the NFHS SMAC strongly encourage member state associations to incorporate all of the "Fundamental Musts" into any heat acclimatization plan to improve athlete safety. In addition, the online "A Guide to Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention" should be required viewing for all coaches.

### Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention Keys for Coaches

1. Recognize that Exertional Heatstroke (EHS) is the leading preventable cause of death among high school athletes.
2. Know the importance of a formal pre-season heat acclimatization plan.
3. Know the importance of having and implementing a specific hydration plan, keeping your athletes well hydrated, and providing ample opportunities for, and encouraging, regular fluid replacement.

**2012 POINTS OF EMPHASIS (cont'd)**

4. Know the importance of appropriately modifying activities in relation to the environmental heat stress and contributing individual risk factors (e.g., illness, obesity) to keep your athletes safe and performing well.
5. Know the importance for all staff to closely monitor all athletes during practice and training in the heat, and recognize the signs and symptoms of developing heat illnesses.
6. Know the importance of, and resources for, establishing an emergency action plan, practicing the aspects of that plan, and promptly implementing it in case of suspected EHS or other medical emergency.

**Fundamentals of a Heat Acclimatization Plan**

1. Physical exertion and training activities should begin slowly and continue progressively. An athlete cannot be "conditioned" in a period of only two to three weeks.
2. Keep each athlete's individual level of conditioning and medical status in mind and adjust activity accordingly. These factors directly affect heat illness risk.
3. Adjust intensity (lower) and rest breaks (increase frequency/duration), and consider reducing uniform and protective equipment, while being sure to monitor all players more closely as conditions are increasingly warm/humid, especially if there is a change in weather from the previous few days.
4. Athletes must begin practices and training activities adequately hydrated.
5. Recognize early signs of distress and developing exertional heat illness, and promptly adjust activity and treat accordingly. First aid should not be delayed!
6. Recognize more serious signs of exertional heat-related distress (clumsiness, stumbling, collapse, obvious behavioral changes and/or other central nervous system problems), immediately stop activity and promptly seek medical attention by activating the Emergency Medical System. On-site rapid cooling should begin immediately.

7. An Emergency Action Plan with clearly defined written and practiced protocols should be developed and in place ahead of time.

**HURDLING**

In 2012, the committee had requests to change the hurdling rule and eliminate it as a foul. By definition: "*Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump (hurdle) with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one or both feet.*" This is an Illegal Personal Contact Foul (NFHS Football Rule 9-4-3d) and carries a 15-yard penalty. Recently, national and local media have identified some of these plays at the collegiate and professional levels as "spectacular feats" and glorified the individual's athletic ability instead of pointing out the heightened potential for harm. Little regard has been given to the fact that attempting to "hurdle" a defender increases the risk of injury to both the hurdler and tackler! The NFHS SMAC requested that this rule not be changed and backed up its request by showing several incidences where players were severely injured while attempting this act! The NFHS Football Rules Committee concurred with the SMAC and did not change the hurdling rule. In addition, to focus on the dangers associated with hurdling, it has been included as a Point of Emphasis for the 2012 season. The emphasis on this illegal act supports the committee's ongoing attempt to minimize the risk of injuries in high school football. Coaches must teach their players of the inherent dangers associated with this illegal act, and game officials must call it when observed.

**2012 POINTS OF EMPHASIS (cont'd)****ILLEGAL BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST**

In high school football, there are very specific rules regarding the time and circumstances when blocking below the waist is legal. There continues to be problems with game officials not enforcing these restrictions on who can block, who can be blocked and where/when these blocks can occur. In order for a block below the waist to be legal, the following criteria must be met:

1. Both players must be lined up in the free-blocking zone at the snap and on the line of scrimmage. The free-blocking zone is defined as 3 yards on either side of the line of scrimmage and 4 yards either side of the ball.
2. The contact/block must occur in the free-blocking zone.
3. The ball must still be in the free-blocking zone.

The NFHS Football Rules Committee wants to emphasize several examples where it is important to enforce this rule. When a team is lined up in shotgun formation, the restrictions on blocking below the waist begin the moment that the ball leaves the free-blocking zone. Because a shotgun quarterback is usually positioned more than 3 yards behind the line at the snap, when the ball is snapped the ball very quickly leaves the zone and therefore, the only legal blocks below the waist have to be initiated simultaneously with the snap.

Another common example of an illegal block below the waist is when running backs, who line up in the backfield, are "cut" by defenders on sweeps or on roll-out passes. This is clearly a violation of the blocking- below-the-waist rule because it occurs by a player who was not originally on the line of scrimmage and occurs outside the free-blocking zone.

Remember, players on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone at the time of the snap can legally block below the waist, but only

if the free-blocking zone still exists because the ball has not left the zone. The rule applies equally to the offense and the defense.

**ILLEGAL SHIFTS INVOLVING THE QUARTERBACK**

As today's offensive formations continue to become more complex, it must be stressed to all coaches and game officials the need to eliminate illegal shifts involving the quarterback. Whenever any player on the offensive team moves to a new position after the ready-for-play signal and before the snap, it is a shift (NFHS Football Rule 2-39). Coaches and game officials must recognize that certain movements by quarterbacks must also be penalized as illegal shifts.

There are several examples of movements by the quarterback that would be considered an illegal shift, such as when all offensive players immediately get into their stance and then the quarterback receives the snap as soon as he/she gets their hands under center. This is illegal because the quarterback needs to be set for one second prior to the snap after the linemen going into stance as this is, in fact, a shift. An illegal-shift foul also occurs when the quarterback first sends a player in motion and after the player is in motion, the quarterback then goes under center to receive the snap.

When all other offensive players are set, movements by the quarterback, other than slightly moving a foot to start another player in motion, must be followed by a pause of one second by everyone on the offense to be considered a legal shift. If the offense is allowed to execute illegal shifts or other movements, teams will gain an advantage not intended by the rules and will disrupt the desired balance between offense and defense.

**IMPROPER UNIFORMS:** These issues can be grouped into two general categories. Not properly wearing mandatory player equipment and wearing illegal equipment/adornments.

**2012 POINTS OF EMPHASIS (cont'd)****Not Properly Wearing Mandatory Player**

**Equipment:** Pants not covering the knee- Over the years, the NFHS Football Rules Committee has repeatedly emphasized that player equipment must be worn for the protection of the athletes. One piece of player equipment that continues to be inconsistently enforced is the football pants and the required protection of the knee. The committee is encouraging a renewed focus by both coaches and game officials to make sure that pants are worn properly to completely cover the knee. Coaches need to make sure that equipment handed out to players is properly fitted and continues to properly fit throughout the season. Game officials need to recognize when mandatory equipment is not being worn properly and most importantly, game officials must penalize these acts consistently throughout the game, regardless of the situation and regardless of anyone's feelings about the rule as compared to other levels of football.

**Wearing Illegal Equipment/Adornments:**

1. Uniform Adornments - Common violations or issues include:
  - A. Wearing a tinted eye shield - For purpose of injury prevention and recognition, eye shields attached to the helmets must be clear without the presence of any tint and constructed of a molded rigid material.
  - B. Wearing towels that exceed the allowed specifications - One, white, unmarked moisture-absorbing towel can be worn. Towel width is a minimum of 4 inches and maximum of 18 inches, while the length is a minimum of 12 inches and a maximum of 36 inches.
  - C. Wearing sweatbands at an improper location - Moisture-absorbing sweatbands of any color are allowed to be worn as long as they are worn on the wrist, beginning at the base of the thumb and extending no more than 3 inches toward the elbow.

- D. Wearing bicep bands, neck bands and leg bands - Any moisture-absorbing or other band worn on any other area of the body beside the wrist, other than for medical reasons, is considered an illegal uniform adornment.
- E. Uncovered shoulder, rib and back protectors These protectors are to be fully covered by the jersey in order to be legal.
- F. Altered knee and ankle braces - As long as knee and ankle braces are unaltered and worn as intended by the manufacturer's original design, no additional padding is required. If any alterations are done from the manufacturer's design and production, or the brace is worn in a manner other than allowed by rule, the brace is illegal.
- G. Wearing jewelry - Any jewelry other than religious and medical alert medals is considered illegal. Religious medals must be taped and worn under the uniform and medical-alert medals must be taped and may be visible.
- H. Illegal pads and padding - Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow or upper arm are illegal unless padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than 1/2-inch thick.
- I. Helmets not secured properly Helmets must be secured by a properly fastened chinstrap with at least four attachment points.

Coaches and game officials need to be cognizant of the adornments worn by the players, and game officials need to consistently enforce the rules regarding illegal equipment and adornments to prevent further problems from developing with player safety and sportsmanship.

**2012 RULES REVISIONS COMMENTS****RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN REMOVED FOR CORPORATE ADVERTISING AND MARKINGS ON THE FIELD OF PLAY**

**(1-2-3h, 1-2-31 NEW):** The committee cleared the way for State Associations and their member schools to place corporate advertising and/or commercial markings on the field of play. This advertising is not permitted to obstruct the yard lines, hash marks or nine-yard marks. If needed, shadow lines may be utilized to ensure the visibility of the required marks. Previously, advertising was only allowed in the end zones and outside the field.

**FOOTBALL GLOVES MUST MEET THE NOCSAE TEST STANDARD STARTING IN 2013**

**(1-5-2b):** The implementation date for the NOCSAE test standard on football gloves was delayed for one year. Beginning with the 2013 season, all football gloves must meet the NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture, unless made of unaltered plain cloth.

**PLAY CARDS MUST BE WORN ON THE WRIST**

**(1-5-3c(8) NEW):** The committee expanded the list of illegal equipment to include play cards that are not worn on the wrist. The committee had received concerns about players wearing these cards in a location other than the wrist.

**BLOCKING—BELOW-THE-WAIST RULES**

**REVISED (2-3-7):** Under a longstanding interpretation, it was not a foul for a player to block below the waist if the hand(s) of the opponent was first contacted below the waist. This revision changes that interpretation and stipulates that such action is a foul.

**DEFINITION OF A CATCH REVISED**

**(2-4-1):** Previously, the covering official could have ruled that an airborne player attempting to catch the ball would have come down inbounds, but was prevented from doing so because to contact by an opponent.

The revision stipulates that in order to be ruled a player is required to establish possession of the ball and contact the ground inbounds while maintaining possession, regardless of the opponent's action.

**PLAYER REQUIRED TO BE REMOVED IF HELMET COMES OFF DURING THE DOWN**

**(3-5-10d):** The committee reviewed data gathered from multiple states regarding the frequency of helmets coming off during the down. Based on this review, the committee approved a rule change stipulating that if any player's helmet comes off during the down, and it is not due to a foul by the opponent, that player must leave the game for at least one down (unless halftime or an overtime intermission occurs). In such circumstances, an officials' timeout occurs.

**RESTRICTIONS ADDED TO BLOCKING ON FREE KICKS**

**(9-3-8 NEW):** The committee changed the rule to prohibit members of the kicking team from initiating contact (blocking) against members of the receiving team until the ball has broken the plane of the receiving team's restraining line, or until the kicking team is eligible to recover the free-kick. Kicking team members are permitted to block if blocked by members of the receiving team prior to either of these conditions being met.

**ILLEGAL PERSONAL CONTACT PENALTY HAS BEEN REVISED**

**(9-4-3h):** With this change, the foul for grasping the face mask has been expanded to include grasping the tooth and mouth protector attached to the face mask.

**HORSE-COLLAR RULE HAS BEEN MODIFIED**

**(9-4-3k):** The committee clarified the rule by adding the direction in which the opponent was pulled to give guidance to game officials.

### **2012 PIAA ADOPTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS**

- Adopt the 2012 NFHS Football Rules Book.
- Request that college and professional football Contest sites mark their fields in accordance with Rule 1-2-3d, inbounds lines. If that is not possible, it is permissible to use college or professional fields with inbounds lines marked at the distance specified by their respective codes.
- Adopt Rule 1-3-1 NOTE, specifications for the ball to be used in Contests involving only players below the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Adopt Rule 1-3-7, authorizing the use of supplementary equipment to aid in Contest administration.

Modify Rule 3-5-10b (Concussion Rule), to clarify that “an appropriate health-care professional” is a licensed physician of medicine or osteopathic medicine (MD or DO);

- Adopt Rule 3-1-1 NOTE, the Resolving Tied Games (10-Yard Line Overtime) Procedure for use during senior high school varsity football Regular Season and Postseason Contests, as set forth in the NFHS Football Rules Book.
- Adopt Rule 3-1-2, running clock, at all levels (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition, upon completion of the first half and one Team gains a 35-point differential over its opponent, the clock shall be stopped only when an official's time-out is taken, a charged time-out is granted, a period ends, or a score occurs.

### **OFFICIAL COIN TOSS MECHANICS**

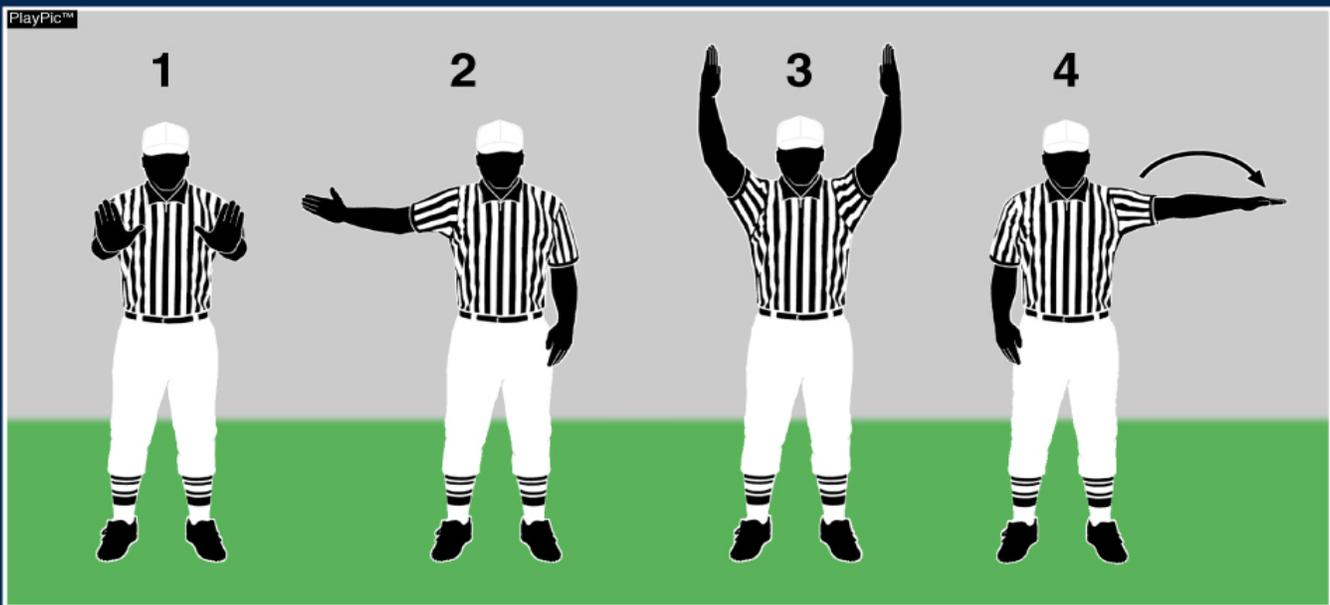
When the official coin toss is held prior to the game's ceremonial coin toss, it is recommended to have the official coin toss, in the home team end zone, 30 minutes prior to contest with the Head Coaches and Captains' of each team. Officials are to read the PIAA Sportsmanship Message at this time and get legally equipped confirmation from each head coach.

Give the visiting speaking captain their option of taking heads or tails before the coin is tossed. Once you have the result of the toss, give the winner of the toss their options. After the winner of the toss selects their option, give the other team their options of which way they want to kick.

After Halftime – Eliminate ceremonial toss to press box and just go to each respective sideline and give instructions to line-up for kickoff based on your pre-game coin toss decisions.

### **OVERTIME PROCEDURE**

1. 3 Minute Intermission
  - a. Communication vital.
  - b. One time-out per-overtime period.
  - c. Penalty carryover.
2. Coin Toss
  - a. Visitor's choice in 1st overtime. (rotate in subsequent OT).
    1. Offense vs. Defense.
    2. Choice of end of field to put ball in play only one end will be utilized during the two sets of downs to insure equal game condition and conserve time.
3. 10-yardline to begin series
4. NO CLOCK
5. Series ends when A scores --- OR with Team B possession.
  - a. Try attempted by A.
  - b. Try attempted by B unless winner is determined.
  - c. If defense scores either safety or TD game is over.
6. Line-to-gain.....is always the goal line.

**MECHANICS FOR OVERTIME**

## 1. Coin toss:

3-2-1: At the coin toss in the center of the field the visiting-team's captain shall be given the privilege of choosing heads or tails before the coin is tossed. The winner of the toss shall be given his choice of defense or offense first, or of designating the end of the field at which the ball will be put in play for this set of downs. The loser will have his choice of the other options. The referee will indicate the winner of the toss by placing a hand on his shoulder. To indicate which team will go on offense, the referee will have that captain face the goal toward which his team will advance and indicate this with the first-down signal. The other team captain will face the offensive captain with his back toward the goal he will defend.

## 2. Signaling Sequence for Penalties Enforced on Subsequent Kickoff.

Signaling Sequence for Penalties Enforced on the Subsequent Kickoff:

The NFHS Officials Manual Committee has approved a new procedure to be used on scoring plays involving a penalty by the opponent of the scoring team. The following is the procedure that is to be used by the referee:

- 1 and 2. Referee gives preliminary penalty signal and indicates offending team.
- The referee then obtains the captain's choice.
- 1 and 2. Referee gives penalty signal and indicates offending team again.
- If penalty is accepted and is to be enforced on the subsequent kickoff, the Referee indicates that the score counts.
- If penalty will be enforced on the subsequent kickoff, the Referee should indicate by pointing to midfield.
- The Back Judge in 5-person and the Lines man in 4-person, will repeat penalty signal.
- and indicate offending team again by giving final signals, prior to stepping off penalty and prior to the subsequent kickoff.

## 3. NO CHAINS .... Only down indicator used.

## 4. SERIES ENDS ON CHANGE OF POSSESSION ..... SOUND WHISTLE.

**SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND FOOTBALL  
HELMET WARNING STATEMENT**

Athletes who participate in the sport of football accept the risk of injuries. However, athletes also have the right to assume that those who are responsible for the conduct of the sport, i.e., administrators, coaches and athletic trainers, have taken reasonable precautions to minimize the risk of significant injury. Refinements in the playing rules, the development of risk minimization guidelines and the establishment of equipment standards have helped to reduce significant injuries. However, to legislate safety via the rules book and equipment standards are never a complete answer. All who are involved with participation in the sport of football share in the responsibility of minimizing the sport's inherent risks?

The coach is responsible for pregame verification that in addition to other required equipment, all players have a helmet which met National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) standards when manufactured and each helmet has an exterior warning label. While important, the fact the athletes are wearing certified helmets is only the first step. The athletes involved must be aware of all the basic principles of head and neck injury prevention.

**Helmet Warning Statement**

Since 1985 the NOCSAE football helmet standard has required a warning label on the outside of the helmet to inform each player of these risks and responsibilities. The warning label must use language that conveys the following information:

**WARNING**

NO HELMET CAN PREVENT ALL HEAD OR ANY NECK INJURIES A PLAYER MIGHT RECEIVE WHILE PARTICIPATING IN FOOTBALL.

DO NOT USE THE HELMET TO BUTT, RAM OR SPEAR AN OPPOSING PLAYER. THIS IS IN VIOLATION OF THE FOOTBALL RULES AND SUCH USE CAN RESULT IN SEVERE HEAD OR NECK INJURIES, PARALYSIS OR DEATH TO YOU AND POSSIBLE INJURY TO YOUR OPPONENT.

**PIAA BY-LAWS, ARTICLE XV; SECTION 3  
REQUIREMENT OF WRITTEN CONTRACT**

All PIAA member schools shall enter into either paper or electronic contracts on the official contract form entitled "Contract for Officials Under PIAA Rules" with all registered sports officials retained by the schools or assigned by an assignor. Registered sports officials are independent contractors and therefore, are NOT employees of PIAA, the school, or the assignor. Disputes arising from oral agreements will not be considered by PIAA.

## SECTION 4 VIOLATION OR CANCELLATION OF SPORTS OFFICIAL'S CONTRACT BY A PIAA MEMBER SCHOOL

If a PIAA member school violates or cancels a contract with an official, the District Committee or the Board of Directors, in their respective jurisdictions, may require a school so violating or so canceling to pay to the offended official the fee or fees for the Contest or Contests which have been provided in the official contract. Failure of a PIAA member school to live up to the terms of the contract shall be considered a violation of the Constitution and By-Laws of PIAA.

**Comment:** It has been brought to our attention on numerous occasions that officials have lost assignments or games because a school or assignor has “double booked” the contest. Officials are reminded that unless there is a written contract executed between the parties, they have no claim to any type of reimbursement from the offending school(s). Many schools have made a “good faith “ effort to the officials to get them an additional assignment in the future or offer a scrimmage to pick up the lost fees. However, officially, without a written, signed, properly executed contract between the official(s) and the school(s), there is no recourse for the officials. In this day of technology it is not very hard for assignors, or schools, to execute these contracts. This is part of an assignor’s responsibility. Officials should request contracts from their assignors or schools for both parties protection.

### PIAA BY-LAWS: ARTICLE XIII, SECTION 8

Any coach and/or contestant who, while coaching or competing for a PIAA member school, is ejected from a Contest by a state high school association recognized and/or registered official in that sport for unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant misconduct shall be disqualified from coaching and/or participating **for the remainder of the day and in all Contests on the next Contest day of the same level (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition.** For a coach, participation in the next Contest includes any contact by the coach with members of the Team, including other coaches, between the time that the Team arrives at the Contest site and the conclusion of the last Contest of the day. The Principal shall direct the coach not to attend all of the Contest(s).

Any coach and/or contestant ejected from the last Contest in that sport in a sport season shall be disqualified from coaching and/or participating in the first Contest(s) in that sport in the subsequent sport season, at the same level (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition, at any PIAA member school or, if the student changes levels of competition, such as from junior varsity to varsity, the first Contest(s) in that sport.

The official shall file a report with the PIAA Office on the form prescribed for the sport involved, within twenty-four (24) hours following the completion of the Contest in which the ejection occurred. Failure to file such report shall not affect the validity or consequences of the ejection.

In football, the athletic director and principal must meet with the ejected coach/contestant and detail in a report what corrective action has been taken. This report then must be signed by all parties and sent to the district football chairperson. This form is located on the PIAA website on the football page.

When a coach or contestant is disqualified/ejected from a Regular or Post-Regular Season Contest a report must be filed by the official who disqualified/ejected the coach or contestant. When the report is received in the PIAA Office it is faxed to the concerned school Principal and Athletic Director and mailed to the respective District Chairmen, officials’ representatives and sportsmanship chair. A copy is also given to the Associate Executive Director and placed in the school’s file.

**PIAA BY-LAWS: ARTICLE XIII, SECTION 8 (cont'd)**

**OFFICIALS ARE TO FILE A REPORT WITH THE PIAA OFFICE ON THE APPROPRIATE FORM WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE EJECTION OR THEY MAY BE PLACED ON PROBATION.**

Officials may complete the disqualification form online through the officials' information area of the PIAA website. Additionally, officials may email or fax a downloaded copy of the disqualification form. Officials who repeatedly do not file the proper form in the prescribed time period may be suspended.

**EXAMPLES OF DISQUALIFICATION PROVISION OF ARTICLE XIII, SECTION 8**

The following examples are for players or coaches and are only examples and not a complete list. What this means is a player or coach ejected from a contest at any level must sit out the remainder of the day and the next day of the next contest at that level.

**Example #1:** Player/coach gets ejected from a junior varsity contest before a varsity contest. This player/coach gets disqualified for the **remainder of the day and the next day** of the next junior varsity contest. If this contest is followed by a varsity contest **on the same day**, the player/coach gets disqualified for the varsity contest also (**the whole day**).

**Example #2:** Player/coach gets ejected from a varsity contest on Friday, the team's next varsity contest is Friday. Before the varsity contest is a scheduled junior varsity contest, player/coach cannot participate in any of Friday contests.

**Example #3:** Player/coach gets ejected from a varsity football game Saturday. The next varsity contest is a game on next Friday but the game gets postponed to Saturday. On Saturday, the junior varsity team is to play in another football game, is player and/or coach eligible to participate in the junior varsity game?

**Ruling:** No. Since the Friday contest was postponed the **next varsity game** is the same day as the junior varsity game and the player/coach are not eligible to participate the whole day.



If you are in need of updating your officiating supplies, please be reminded that Officially Sports is the official vendor of PIAA Sport Officials' Uniforms. Please give them your consideration for any purchases regarding officials' supplies. If interested, you may provide them with your email address to send you their catalog, seasonal specials and discounted items that may be of interest and service to your avocation of sports' officiating. Officially Sports may be contacted via email at [mjsumpref@aol.com](mailto:mjsumpref@aol.com), by calling 800-934-4555 or at [www.officiallysports.com](http://www.officiallysports.com).

## PIAA OFFICIALS INSURANCE

For the 2012-2013 school year, American Specialty Insurance Services will provide the following benefits:

- One Million Dollars of Liability Coverage;
- \$25,000 Excess Accident Medical Coverage (with a \$250 deductible);
- \$5,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment (including a cardiac benefit).

This program is administered by American Specialty Insurance Services and underwritten by USF&G and Mutual of Omaha. Both carriers carry "A" ratings by A.M. Best. Again this year, as a new service for chapters, all regularly scheduled chapter meetings will be covered under PIAA's basic liability coverage. This is a major change from the past when only the annual rules interpretation meetings have been covered. Chapters are requested to please submit their list of regularly scheduled chapter meetings to the PIAA Office to assist procedurally in the exchange of information to have all local associations' meetings covered.

**Contact information is as follows:**

**Drew Smith,**

**Vice-President for Client Services**

**Sara Douglass, Administrative Assistant**

**American Specialty Insurances Services,**

**Inc.142 N. Main Street,**

**P.O. Box 309**

**Roanoke, Indiana 46783-0309**

**Phone: 260-672-8800**

**Fax: 260-673-1295**

**www.amerspec.com**



## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND SKIN INFECTION PROCEDURES

Proper precautions are needed to minimize the potential risk of the spread of communicable disease and skin infections during athletic competition. These conditions include skin infections that occur due to skin contact with competitors and equipment. The transmission of infections such as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Herpes Gladiatorum, blood-borne pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B, and other infectious diseases such as Influenza can often be greatly reduced through proper hygiene. The NFHS SMAC has outlined and listed below some general guidelines for the prevention of the spread of these diseases.

### UNIVERSAL HYGIENE PROTOCOL FOR ALL SPORTS

- Shower immediately after every competition and practice.
- Wash all workout clothing after each practice.
- Wash personal gear (knee pads and braces) weekly.
- Do not share towels or personal hygiene products (razors) with others.
- Refrain from full body (chest, arms, abdomen) cosmetic shaving.

### INFECTIOUS SKIN DISEASES

**Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these infectious agents include:**

- Athletes must be told to notify a parent or guardian, athletic trainer and coach of any skin lesion prior to any competition or practice. An appropriate health-care professional should evaluate any skin lesion before returning to competition.
- If an outbreak occurs on a team, especially in a contact sport, all team members should be evaluated to help prevent the potential spread of infection.
- Coaches, officials and appropriate health-care professionals must follow NFHS or state/local guidelines on "time until return to competition." Participation with a covered lesion may be considered if in accordance with NFHS, state or local guidelines and the lesion is no longer contagious.

**BLOOD-BORNE INFECTIOUS DIS-**

**Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these agents include following Universal Precautions such as:**

- An athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the activity (game or practice) until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to activity.
- Athletic trainers or other caregivers need to wear gloves and take other precautions to prevent blood or body fluid-splash from contaminating themselves or others.
- In the event of a blood or body fluid-splash, immediately wash contaminated skin or mucous membranes with soap and water.
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with disinfectant before returning to competition. Be sure to use gloves when cleaning.
- Any blood exposure or bites to the skin that break the surface must be reported and immediately evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

**OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

**Means of reducing the potential exposure to these agents include:**

- Appropriate vaccination of athletes, coaches and staff as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- During time of outbreaks, follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC as well as State and local Health Departments.

For more detailed information, refer to the Infectious Disease and Blood-borne Pathogens” and “Skin Disorders” sections contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

**OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

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For more detailed information, refer to the Infectious Disease and Blood-borne Pathogens” and “Skin Disorders” sections contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

**PIAA 2012 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE**

First Practice Date .....	Monday, August 13
First Inter-School/Scrimmage Date .....	Saturday, August 18
First Regular Season Play Date .....	Friday, August 31
Last Regular Season Contest Date .....	Saturday, November 3
District Championship Deadline .....	Saturday, November 17
PIAA Football Championships:	
First Round.....	Friday & Saturday, November 23 & 24
Quarterfinals .....	Friday & Saturday, November & December 30 & 1
Semi-Finals .....	Friday & Saturday, December 7 & 8
PIAA A & AAA Football Championship Finals	
HERSHEYPARK Stadium, Hershey,.....	Friday, December 14
Championship Schedule:	
A .....	1:00 pm
AAA .....	7:00 pm
PIAA AA & AAAA Football Championship Finals	
HERSHEYPARK Stadium, Hershey,.....	Saturday, December 15
Championship Schedule:	
AA .....	12:00 pm
AAAA .....	6:00 pm

**OFFICIALS' UNIFORM**

1. The PIAA Official's Emblem must be worn on the upper left sleeve of the official's standard shirt when officiating in all PIAA sponsored games.
2. All PIAA-registered officials must wear identical uniforms during a contest.
3. Required uniform for football officials:
  - Hat:** Black baseball cap with white piping. The referee shall wear a solid white baseball cap.
  - Shirt:** Alternating black and white 1-inch vertically striped, long or short sleeved shirt with a black collar.
  - Belt:** Black belt 1 1/4 to 2 inches wide.
  - Knickers:** White tapered knickers shall be worn with a short overlap below the knee (not more than 4 inches).
  - Pants:** Black - tailored black pant with white stripe on outside of leg.
  - Stockings:** One-piece stocking with a modified northwestern stripe.
  - Shoes:** **SOLID BLACK** with black laces (no white markings).
  - Jacket:** Black and white vertically striped jacket (not to be worn during the game).
  - Lanyard:** Black.
  - Whistle:** Black (recommended).
  - Turtleneck:** Black or white (if needed).

The wearing of jewelry (except wedding bands and medical-alert bracelets) and wrist watches (except as a required timing device) is prohibited. Smoking and/or tobacco chewing is prohibited. (Minutes, Board of Control, PIAA Summer Workshop, July 17, 1989, p. 3).

PIAA sports' officials may display an American flag (maximum size 2 by 3 inches) on the right sleeve of their uniform shirt approximately three inches down from the shoulder seam. This will be the same position the PIAA official patch is displayed on the left sleeve.

**Please Note:** Shorts are no longer permitted as part of the PIAA required uniform policy (July 17, 1998 Board of Control meeting).

**FIFTH QUARTER**

Officials are not authorized to remain on the field in an officiating capacity if schools agree to play extended quarters. This is contrary to authorized playing time for junior high and senior high competition. This type of action may place officials in liability jeopardy since these type of activities violate the standard of play for length of quarters in the NFHS football rules book and the PIAA By-laws.

**COMMON SENSE**

With all the dialogue of concussions and the prevention of injuries, officials are requested to use prudent judgment in the handling of players who appear injured during playing action. If a player exhibits any signs of a concussion, or is injured in any manner, officials should do their due diligence in requesting the team's coaching staff or team medical personnel evaluate the player(s) involved. This is priority communication between the officials and the coaching staff. Please ensure that any player who appears injured must be evaluated by the team's medical personnel. Safety of players is priority one and before we remove any player from a contest, make sure the team's medical personnel are involved with the decision making.

**VISORS**

Officials are reminded that visors being worn by players during competition are now legal by NFHS football rules provided they meet two criteria as detailed in Rule 1-5-3,c,3. An eye shield attached to the helmet that is (a) constructed of a molded rigid material or (b) is clear without the presence of any tint. This alleviates the paperwork from principals signing off on the use of these items for their players and the officials having to review them before the contest.

**PIAA SPORTSMANSHIP MESSAGE**

**ALL OFFICIALS MUST READ THIS MESSAGE TO CAPTAINS AND HEAD COACHES PRIOR TO GAMES AT ALL LEVELS.**

*PIAA requires all registered sports' officials to enforce the sportsmanship rules for coaches and contestants. Actions meant to demean opposing contestants, team, spectators, and officials are not in the highest ideals of interscholastic education and will not be tolerated. Let today's contest reflect mutual respect. Coaches please certify to the officials that your players are legally equipped and uniformed according to NFHS rules and PIAA adoptions. Good luck in today's contest..*



For distribution purposes, this message is printed on the back of all PIAA registered sports officials' 2012-2013 identification cards. Chapter interpreters are requested to remind all officials to read this message at each contest they officiate.

There have been some concerns addressed by the schools that some of our officials are not reading the PIAA Sportsmanship message prior to the contest. This is an improper procedure and this message **MUST** be read. Officials are not to paraphrase, modify, or develop their own Sportsmanship Message to the captains and head coaches. The proper procedure is head coaches and captains **MUST** attend the pre-game reading of the sportsmanship message. For distribution purposes, this message is printed on the back of all PIAA registered sports officials' 2012-2013 identification cards. Chapter interpreters are requested to remind all officials to read this message at each contest they officiate.

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This message **MUST BE READ VERBATIM** by the contest officials. Coaches must certify to the contest officials their team is legally equipped and in compliance with NFHS Football Rules. The reading of this message will set the tone for the contest to be played in the spirit of good sportsmanship and have the coaches verbally confirm aloud their teams' adherence to compliance with equipment and safety rules. This confirmation is not only the adherence to contest rules, but also assists in alleviating the legal liability concerns for the officials if the teams subsequently violate the proper equipment provisions of the contest rules.

**GUIDE LINES ON HANDLING CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING DISTURBANCE**

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 for your facility would include your state high school association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

***Proactive Planning***

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during events.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby shelter.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play.
  - When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
  - Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
  - Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
4. Hold periodic reviews for appropriate personnel.

*As copied from the NFHS 2012 Football Rules Book.*

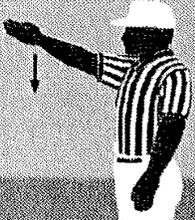
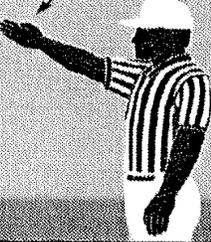
**PIAA CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY  
FOR ALL SPORTS**

PIAA has a written policy regarding conflict of interest. This policy is in all of our post-regular season officiating contracts. What is detailed below is the standard operating practice that we have used for years. If areas of the state have not been adhering to this, it does not mean the policy and practice does not exist. It does exist and is contained in the PIAA Athletic Officials' Manual for all officials to see and be on the same page.

The standard operating procedure that we have used is an official will remove themselves from a contest if you find that you have any personal association with any of the competitors or coaches on any team, with the competitors' school, or with the competitors' community, such as being a relative of a competitor, or being an employee or a relative of a competitor in the competitors school district, or a resident of the competitors' community.

**COMMENT:** Officials accepting assignments for contest at their local school where they live, or have a relative competing, place themselves in a compromising position in the performance of their duties as a registered official. Every decision and judgment is open to criticism and places the official in a compromising position where it brings into question the integrity and actions of the official. This is an indefensible position for the official and assignments of this nature are not to be taken or accepted by PIAA registered sports' officials. In extreme cases of emergency and situations that may be completely unavoidable are the only exceptions to this policy.

**NFHS** **OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS** **USA Football**

<p><b>1</b> Ball ready for play *Untimed down</p>  	<p><b>2</b> Start clock</p> 	<p><b>3</b> Time-out Discretionary or injury time-out (followed by tapping hands on chest)</p> 		
<p><b>4</b> TV/radio time-out</p> 	<p><b>5</b> Touchdown, Field goal, Point(s) after touchdown</p> 	<p><b>6</b> Safety</p> 	<p><b>7</b> Dead ball foul, Touchback (move side to side)</p> 	
<p><b>8</b> First down</p> 	<p><b>9</b> Loss of down</p> 	<p><b>10</b> Incomplete forward pass Penalty declined No play, no score Toss option deferred</p> 	<p><b>11</b> Legal touching of forward pass or scrimmage kick</p> 	<p><b>12</b> Inadvertent whistle</p> 
<p><b>13</b> Disregard flag</p> 	<p><b>14</b> End of period</p> 	<p><b>15</b> Sideline warning</p> 	<p><b>16</b> First touching Illegal touching</p> 	
<p><b>18</b> Encroachment</p> 	<p><b>19</b> False start Illegal formation</p> 	<p><b>20</b> Illegal shift (2 hands) Illegal motion (1 hand)</p> 	<p><b>21</b> Delay of game</p> 	<p><b>22</b> Substitution infraction</p> 



# OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS



<p><b>23 Failure to wear required equipment</b></p>	<p><b>24 Illegal helmet contact</b></p>	<p><b>25 Illegal horse-collar tackle</b></p>	<p><b>27 Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul</b></p>	<p><b>28 Illegal participation</b></p>
<p><b>29 Sideline interference (Face press box)</b></p>	<p><b>30 Running into or Roughing kicker or holder</b></p>	<p><b>31 Illegal batting/kicking (Followed by pointing toward toe for kicking)</b></p>	<p><b>32 Invalid fair catch Illegal fair catch signal</b></p>	<p><b>33 Forward pass interference Kick catching interference</b></p>
<p><b>34 Roughing passer</b></p>	<p><b>35 Illegal pass/forward handing (Face press box)</b></p>	<p><b>36 Intentional grounding</b></p>	<p><b>37 Ineligible downfield on pass</b></p>	<p><b>38 Personal foul</b></p>
<p><b>39 Clipping</b></p>	<p><b>40 Blocking below waist Illegal block</b></p>	<p><b>41 Chop block</b></p>	<p><b>42 Holding/obstruction Illegal use of hands/arms</b></p>	<p><b>43 Illegal block in the back</b></p>
<p><b>44 Helping runner Interlocked blocking</b></p>	<p><b>45 Grasping face mask or helmet opening</b></p>	<p><b>46 Tripping</b></p>	<p><b>47 Disqualification</b></p>	

**INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**550 GETTYSBURG ROAD, PO BOX 2008**  
**MECHANICSBURG PA 17055-0708**  
**TELEPHONE (717) 697-0374 OR (800) 382-1392 FAX (717) 697-7721**  
**WEBSITE [www.piaa.org](http://www.piaa.org)**

**FOOTBALL PLAYER, COACH, OR TEAM PERSONNEL DISQUALIFICATION FORM**

During the 2012 PIAA football Regular Season and Postseason, a disqualified football player, coach, and/or Team personnel shall not be permitted to participate **for the remainder of the day and in all Contests on the next Contest day of the same level (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition from which the player, coach, and/or Team personnel was previously disqualified.** For a coach, participation in the next Contest includes any contact by the coach with members of the Team, including other coaches, between the time that the Team arrives at the Contest site and the conclusion of the last Contest of the day. The Principal shall direct the coach not to attend all of the Contest(s), in accordance with Article XIII, Section 8 of the PIAA By-Laws and NFHS Football Rules 2-16-2c, 2-20-1, 2-32-6, 7-5-2, 7-5-13, 9-4, 9-5, 9-6, 9-8, and 9-9. The referee must complete and file this form, as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours following the completion of the Contest in which the disqualification took place by forwarding it to the above address.

Name of Ejected Player, Coach or Bench Personnel		School Name
Date of Contest	Location of Contest	Time of Contest
Visiting Team	PIAA District	Visiting Team's Final Score
Home Team	PIAA District	Home Team's Final Score
Name of Official Who Ejected Player, Coach or Bench Personnel		Level of Competition

**REASON FOR DISQUALIFICATION**  
 (Use The Back Of This Form If Necessary)

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DATE OF REPORT	OFFICIAL'S SIGNATURE (PERSON ISSUING DQ)	PIAA DISTRICT
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