

Key Points From PIAA Football Bulletin 1, September 2011:

The Mercy Rule is applicable to any level of PIAA competition, including junior high, JV, varsity and playoff games

The Mercy Rule goes into effect at the completion of the 1st half: once a team gains a 35 point differential at any time after the end of the 1st half, including the 2nd half kickoff, the Mercy Rule goes into effect, and it stays in effect for the rest of the game, even if there is no longer a 35 point differential

The Mercy Rule is a running clock that is stopped only when:

- An official's time-out is taken,
- A charged time-out is granted,
- A period ends, or
- A score occurs

Examples of an official's time-out (3-5-7)

- For a measurement
- When a 1st down is declared
- Following a change in team possession
- For a player in need of equipment repair
- After a foul, to administer a penalty
- For a TV/radio time-out
- For the 1 minute intermission
 - Between the 3rd and 4th periods, and
 - Following a try, successful field goal or safety and prior to the succeeding free kick

Starting the clock when the Mercy Rule is in effect:

- After an official's time-out: on the ready-for-play (RFP)
- After a charged time-out: on the snap
- After the end of the 3rd period: on the snap or when a free kick is legally touched
- After a score: when the subsequent free kick is legally touched

Procedures to use when the Mercy Rule is in effect:

- Incomplete pass on 1st, 2nd or 3rd down: clock continues to run
- Ball carrier goes out of bounds (OOB) on 1st, 2nd or 3rd down: clock continues to run
- A or B gets a 1st down: stop clock, set chains, start clock on RFP
- A gains a 1st down by the ball carrier going OOB: stop clock, set chains, start clock on RFP
- After a free kick, punt or any other change in team possession: stop clock and start on the RFP
- After a score: stop clock, remains stopped throughout the try
- Kickoff: start clock when legally touched
- Touchback after a kickoff: start on RFP