

2014 Football Bulletin I

**October
2014**

Assistant Executive
Director:
Patrick B. Gebhart

Statewide Rules
Interpreter:
Paul J. Sheehan



Rules, Revisions, and Interpretations

PIAA Officials' Staff:

Cathy M. Good, Chapters' Secretary

Debrah J. Rosenberger, Officials' Secretary

Wendy A. Merlina, Officials' Corresponding Sec.



2014 IN-SEASON MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS

August

- Tinted eyewear (eyeglasses, safety specs, etc.) worn on the face under the face mask are legal without authorization. Tinted visors are illegal, all visors attached to the face mask must be clear.
- The only color mouthpieces that are illegal are completely white or completely clear. Any other colored mouthpieces are legal.
- The rubber bands ("Livestrong" type) worn on the wrists are illegal, have them removed before playing. If you happen to see one on during the play, just have the player remove it, do not call a foul. There should be no other bands worn on the biceps, calves, ankles, etc. These are a safety issue and could result in a player's fingers being injured if they get caught in them. Sweat bands worn on the wrists are legal not to exceed 3 inches in length. Also, if gloves are not being worn in the game, do not let the players participate with them strapped to their belt.
- A penalty flag should be thrown for a sideline warning. We want everyone to know there is a warning being issued. Also the Referee should step out into the open, just like any other foul, and announce the sideline warning while giving signal 15. If there is a field mic used, the warning should also be announced over the mic. The warning should be recorded by at least 2 officials on their game cards so there will be no questions as to when the first warning was given. This will also give us a reference point if a coach disputes that a warning was given.
- The "swim" move by a defensive lineman is legal as long as the player does not contact the opponent to the helmet or above the shoulders, the old time "bell ringers" where the opponent hits the helmet and then swims the other arm through are illegal and is a form of targeting.
- On long runs, let's not over-officiate the hits behind the play. The ones we want to call are the more violent ones where a player is blind-sided and could be injured.

2014 IN-SEASON MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS cont'd

- Footballs - During the Regular season a team may use any approved NFHS football of their choice, starting with District and Inter-District playoff games the adopted official PIAA Rawlings ball will be the only ball allowed to be used. The PIAA ball adoption agreement can be found on the PIAA website under the Football tab. See page 4 in this bulletin for more ball clarification information.
- A different kicking ball cannot be used during the same series of downs. For example, if a team is using an approved Wilson ball for the start of a series, they cannot bring in a Rawlings ball on 4th down to try a field goal or to try an extra point kick after a touchdown. A team may use an approved ball of their choice for the try if they score a TD after a change of possession.
- An ineligible team A player by number or position can throw a legal forward pass, and also an ineligible team A player can catch or recover a backward pass and advance.
- We have to make a distinction when calling an illegal personal contact foul and an unsportsmanlike foul. An unsportsmanlike foul is a non-contact foul (other than unintentional contact outside the team box) while the ball is dead or during the down, the 2nd unsportsmanlike conduct foul on the same player or non-payer results in an automatic disqualification. An illegal personal contact foul is a foul with contact as in 9-4-3. The 2nd personal foul on the same player does not result in an automatic disqualification. Remember if any foul is deemed flagrant, then there will be a DQ.
- Reminder OPI and DPI are not automatic first downs.
- An injured player for whom the clock was stopped must stay out 1 play unless the 2nd or 4th period ended. They cannot be "bought" back in with a team timeout.
- Be aware of the down and distance on every play, we do not want to miss a down or give an extra down.
- Remind Referees that they should strive to mark the ready for play 12-15 seconds after the ball is dead on the previous play. We want to be consistent with this throughout the entire game.
- For the ceremonial coin toss at 3 minutes before kickoff and if there is an overtime coin toss, only the four captains come to the center of the field, not the head coaches.
- Counts - be sure to count number of players on offense and defense every play, especially if a team is huddled after a timeout and they come directly to the line of scrimmage. We don't want to get burned for too many players participating and we missed the count.
- If there is a disqualification in a game, the ejecting official must complete the report and file with the PIAA office within 24 hours. Please do not send duplicate reports, they all get filed with the school and could cause confusion.
- Umpires should be checking and marking ALL approved game balls, legal inflation is 13 psi.
- If the defense substitutes and the player begins to leave within 3 seconds but does not get off the field before the ball is snapped, is a live ball illegal substitution foul at the snap and if enforced is from the previous spot.
- Helmet coverings worn on the outside of the helmet (i.e. guardian covers) are legal to be worn. If they are not similar in color, allow them to be worn, but report them to your District Interpreter.
- If there is an overtime period, or periods, there is only one coin toss before the initial OT period. The choices for the second, third, etc. overtimes will be alternated with the loser choosing first and so on. Also, only the captains come to the middle of the field for the overtime coin toss, not coaches.
- Officials are not permitted to wear shorts when working sub-varsity games.

2014 IN-SEASON MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS cont'd

- If the clock is stopped for a player who is bleeding or has blood on their uniform and he/she is sent off the field, is treated the same as an injured player. The player must remain out of the game for one play unless halftime or an overtime intermission occurs. The player cannot be brought back into the game after a team timeout to clean off the blood.
- A missed field goal that breaks the plane of R's goal line and is unsuccessful is a touchback. If the kick is from the B-5 yard line or the B-30 yard line, it is still a touchback and the next play would be B's ball 1st and 10 from the 20. Do not bring it back to the previous spot.
- You make the call: Middle of the 3rd period A14 is running in the clear for a TD, he taunts B50 at the 5 yard line but he fumbles the ball at the 2. Teammate A30 falls on the loose ball in the B end zone.
- Answer: The TD will count for Team A and then Team B will have a choice of enforcing the USC foul on A14 on the try or on the succeeding kickoff.
- Referees should have a backup plan for the rotation of officials if one should get injured during the game and can't continue. Discuss this in pre-game so the changes will be smooth and everyone will know the rotation.

September

- Disqualification forms must be filed on-line by the ejecting official within 24 hours after the game. Be as specific as possible and include as much information as possible on the form. If the ejection is related to language use exact language that was used and detail exactly what was said or done by the player or coach that resulted in the disqualification. The DQ form can be found on the PIAA website under the officials tab, Officials forms, Disqualification form.
- In watching game videos, we have too many officials coming onto the field too early while the ball is still alive and are getting involved in the play. Remind your deep officials and wings, especially on free kicks and punts, not come onto the field too early, they can get hit by players or interfere with the play.
- The play cards worn by both offensive and defensive players must be worn on the arm, they are not allowed to be worn on the belt.
- Weather issues - as a reminder, if we have a game interruption due to thunder or lightning, the minimum wait time is 30 minutes from the last clap of thunder or site of lightning. We must keep a member of the crew within eyesight of the outdoors to monitor the weather conditions and make sure there are no "resets" of the delay time. If there is a delay, the game is suspended at the exact point of stoppage, so make sure you record all the game information such as time, score, down, distance, placement of ball, etc.
- Officials are doing a good job with the free kick formations. The teams understand the rule change. Continue to use preventative officiating where needed and get the teams lined up properly before the kick.
- Reminder, if there is a touchdown scored by Team A but there is a live ball personal foul for an illegal contact hit by Team A behind the play, the touchdown does not score and the penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul. If the foul is on Team B, then score the TD and Team A would have the choice of having the foul enforced on the try or the subsequent kickoff.
- Officials ejecting a player, especially if you are not the covering official, be sure it is a foul that requires ejection and could be supported on game video. We have had ejections for punches thrown, but it is not shown on the play video.
- If there are any rule change proposal forms you want to submit, the forms must be received by Paul Sheehan by October 7, 2014.

2014 IN-SEASON MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS cont'd

- There is a second approved football for use during District and Inter-District playoff games, the Rawlings ST-5H (Hybrid), below is the section in the game manager's handbook related to game balls:

CONTEST BALLS AND BALL HOLDERS

Each member school that qualifies for the 2014 PIAA Football Championships shall receive one (1) RAWLINGS® PRO5-PIAA football, the "Official Ball" of the PIAA Football Championships, from their PIAA District Football Championships Tournament Director. EACH PARTICIPATING SCHOOL WILL BE REQUIRED TO USE THE PIAA-PROVIDED RAWLINGS® PRO5-PIAA FOOTBALL AND/OR THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL-PROVIDED RAWLINGS® PRO5-PIAA OR RAWLINGS® ST5H FOOTBALLS DURING THOSE DOWNS IN WHICH IT FREE KICKS OR SNAPS. Following each PIAA Football Inter-District Championships Contest, the winning school shall receive one (1) RAWLINGS® PRO5-PIAA football from the PIAA-Appointed Contest Manager for use during the next Inter-District Football Championship Contest. Each school will be responsible for providing two (2) ball holders (twelve [12] years of age or older) with a sufficient supply of drying towels for use by the crew of officials working the contest, first round to final, inclusive.

- Reminder - in Overtime play, if Team B secures possession in the field of play (i.e. interception, fumble recovery) the play is dead immediately and Team A's series ends. The officials should sound whistles immediately and shut the play down. The only way Team B can score a safety or a touchdown is in the unlikely event the ball is loose in A's end zone and Team A is tackled there or the ball goes out of bounds behind the goal line for a safety or Team B secures possession of a loose ball in A's end zone or intercepts a pass there. Remind the Referees to review overtime in their pre-games.
- Inadvertent whistles on punt plays this season. Make sure you review with your deep judges to hold the whistle until the kick has ended or the player is downed. Do not blow the whistle during a muffed punt. If there is an IW during a punt, the only option is to replay the down at the previous spot. The clock will be on the Ready for Play.

Clarification on Unsportsmanlike/Unintentional Contact fouls

Unsportsmanlike conduct fouls and unintentional contact between a non player and an official in the restricted area while the ball is alive are two separate fouls. Any 2 unsportsmanlike conduct fouls (Rule 9-8) charged to an individual is an ejection of that individual (player or non-player). On the second unintentional contact foul the head coach would be ejected (Rule 9-4-8); however the 2 fouls cannot be combined to cause an ejection of the head coach. (Casebook play 9.8.1 Sit D)

The unintentional contact foul is a illegal personal contact foul (S38 and S29) not an unsportsmanlike foul and is charged to the head coach. Unsportsmanlike conduct fouls (S27) are charged to an individual, except 9-8-1 (g) and (h) , they are charged to the head coach.

2014 IN-SEASON MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS cont'd

- The following is a review of the 35-point differential running clock mechanics:
Rule 3-1-2: Running clock: Upon completion of the first half of an interscholastic football game at any level of competition or anytime during the second half when a team gains a 35-point differential over its opponent, the clock shall be stopped only when an official's timeout is taken, a charged time-out is granted, a period ends or a score occurs. Once implemented, the mercy rule remains in effect, even if the differential becomes less than 35 points.
Examples:
 1. Incomplete pass – clock continues to run.
 2. Ball carrier goes out of bounds – clock continues to run.
 3. First down – stop clock, set chains, start clock on ready-for-play.
 4. Ball carrier makes first down then goes out of bounds – stop clock, set chains, start clock on ready-for-play.
 5. After a free kick, a punt or any other change of possession – stop clock and start on ready-for-play.
 6. After a score – stop clock, remains stopped during the try.
 7. Kickoff – start clock when legally touched other than first touching by K. If result is a touchback, start clock on ready-for-play.**Note:** Nos. 1 and 2 above are the primary situations where the clock continues to run.
When does the clock restart? Generally, whenever it would if any of the stoppages occurred during regular game play.
 1. After an official's time-out – on the ready-for-play.
 2. After a charged time-out – on the snap.
 3. After the end of the third period – on the snap to start the fourth period or when a free kick is legally touched.
 4. After a score – when the subsequent free kick is legally touched other than first touching by K.
- A foul on Team B AFTER the initial ready for play on a try can only be assessed on the try. It cannot carry over to the succeeding spot.
- Officials have been doing a great job officiating the illegal contact fouls, both calling the foul where necessary and not calling a foul on legal hits. Keep up the good work and remember to educate players and coaches when possible. Remember there is no place for these illegal hits in the high school game.

OUTDOOR EVENTS: SPECTATOR DECORUM

The presence and/or the use of balloons, whistles, and/or portable listening devices (without earphones) are PROHIBITED! The Principal and Athletic Director of each school will be requested to confiscate these items from their cheerleaders and/or the spectators from their school and community. The use of pom-poms by cheerleaders and small portable listening devices with earphones is permitted. Spectators are prohibited from removing their shirts and/or using body paint while in attendance at District and Inter-District Championship Contests. Principals and Athletic Directors of competing schools shall announce and publicize these regulations.

As copied from the PLAA Policies and Procedures Manual.

NOTES: