

## Components to Good Officiating

### 1. Knowledge of the Rules

Once you get your rule book, GET INTO IT!!! It is not meant to be read only once. Passing the PIAA exam is one thing, seeing and understanding the rules on the field are another. I recommend the animated/illustrated supplement to the rule book. It will help you “see” the rules in action.

Knowing the rules makes you dangerous yet capable at the same time. Try not to be overly technical when enforcing the rules. You will learn as you go about what we enforce and where we enforce the rules. Always seek advice!

### 2. Appearance

Football officiating is another professional job for us. You are expected to look good at your full-time job. Likewise, we expect you to look professional on the field. Looking the part works to your advantage – professionalism goes a long way with coaches!

Shine your shoes! Keep your shirt tucked in!

Have your flags readily available, but OUT OF SIGHT!!! I recommend tucking flags into your front waist area. Visible flags give the appearance that you are on the field looking for every infraction.

### 3. Mechanics

Our chapter prides itself on having precise and consistent mechanics. Communication is an absolute key to success on the field, both with coaches and your crew. It is vital to learn our mechanics and practice them any chance you can get. When using them, be assertive and consistent – do not change a mechanic because you feel like it. Referring to the officials’ manual and to veteran officials will help you learn and utilize proper mechanics.

Learn to practice PREVENTATIVE OFFICIATING. Don’t look for trouble, prevent it before it happens. You can accomplish this by consistently talking to players. If there is a hold away from the ball, rather than throw your flag, talk to the player who committed the hold – tell him to keep his hands in. Because you are new doesn’t mean you cannot talk to the players. If you see something away from the ball – tell the coach to talk to his player. This goes a long way!

If you see a foul that affects the play, throw your flag to the spot of the foul – if you see it, call it. Do not wait for another official to do your job. If you “think” you saw it, you didn’t see it. You need to be 100% of a call you make.

Blow your whistle. My biggest peeve on the field is an official who half-heartedly tweets his whistle. Blow it hard and sell your call. Officials who blow the whistle hard give off the image that they know what they are doing and they saw what they saw.

Report your fouls correctly to the referee. When you can, get numbers. Know if it was a live ball foul or a dead ball foul. Was it a loose ball? Know your downs! Slow down and speak clearly to the referee when reporting a foul – there is no rush, but the important thing is to get enforcement correct.

Always keep track of down with your wrist band. Record time outs on your game card – do not assume your fellow officials are doing so (even though they should). Record down and distance at the end of the first and third quarters.

We have responsibilities during time outs and at the end of the first and third quarters. Avoid huddling as a group of five during these cases. Keep your eyes and ears open during these times – PREVENTATIVE OFFICIATING!!!

Work as a team. We live and die on the field as a team. We are there to help each other. One weak link on the field makes it a tougher game for the other 3 or 4 officials out there.

#### 4. Judgment

Common sense goes a long way – enough said.

We call any infraction that compromises safety of a player. There are no exceptions to this rule regardless of where it occurs on the field.

See the play from the beginning to the end, and continue to look after that! Know what makes a block legal or illegal – watching the whole play will make you 100% sure.

Do not over-officiate – you become a knit picker and coaches will recognize you for that quality, and you and your crew will be at a disadvantage from the beginning whistle.

## 5. Attitude

You should never think you know everything. I have been doing this since 1997 and I am open to learning every time I step onto the field.

Openly ask fellow officials for advice and things you can improve upon. Ask them for things you are doing well. Avoid an ego!

Do not criticize your fellow officials.

Always try to be cordial to all coaches, athletic directors, and other game personnel.

Lastly, you need to remember that coaches and players practice all week long for many hours just for one game a week. They deserve 110% from each official from the time they arrive to the last whistle. No matter how tired we are, or what that day threw at us, we must give them our best. If you can't do that, reconsider why you got into officiating.

## 6. Social Media

Common sense goes a long way in officiating football, and the use of social media as a sports official is another area where common sense must be applied. Just as we need to be sensitive to our surroundings after a game, we need to police ourselves when posting things on social media. We never know who may access a post. If you wouldn't want your mother to read it, don't post it!