

I. 2014 Football Bulletin III

II. Aug. 15, 2014

To: Commissioners, Board Interpreters, Curriculum reps, CIAC and league reps, media.

From: Bill Riccio, Jr. State Interpreter

Re: Interpreters meeting and decisions made

On Thursday, August 14, the six board interpreters and their assistants met for a meeting to discuss some of the new rules, and the way we believe they should be applied in games throughout the state. The following notes are the results of those discussions. It is hoped these decisions will be reinforced during the year in various chapters meetings and discussions. It should be noted the recommendations here were approved unanimously.

I. Kickoff rules

A. Four on either side of kicker

1. Cluster or "jail-break" formations seem to be legal based on conference call and other correspondence. All players should be inside the 35-yard line or other line if the kick line is moved by penalty.
 - a. Though the rule says it is enforceable from the Ready-for-Play signal, we have adopted some states' interpretations that this foul will be called **only at the time of the kick**.
 - b. We will allow crisscrossing of players behind kicker, which momentarily puts three on one side, but **at the time of the kick** fulfills the rule.
 - c. Back Judges will be instructed to make this part of their pre-kick reminders.
 - d. Referees are primary in the calling of this rule. If there is a violation they are reminded to "lean on the whistle" if this occurs. Other officials should sound their whistles when they hear the "blow and throw."
 - e. During on-side kicks R has to be especially alert to this rule.

Note: It should be remembered the purpose of the rule is to have four on either side of the ball at the time the ball is kicked. We believe these guidelines will inhibit unnecessary fouls, while staying within the intention and spirit of the rule.

B. Five-yard restraining rule

1. Suggested way we talk about this rule: “No K player may be more than five yards behind free kick restraining line except the player who kicks the ball.”
 - a. If a “jail-break” is used all players will have to be within the five-yard “box” (35-yard line or other line as determined if free-kick line is moved by penalty).
 - b. We will instruct Back Judges to make this part of their pre-kick reminders. They are also asked not to put their hands up to signal they are ready for the kickoff until they have all players are in compliance.
 - c. If a foot is partially touching a back line just prior to a kick this is a non-call. The Back Judge probably won’t see it anyway, because he is five yards up on the forward restraining line. Let’s not split hairs.
 - d. Only substantial movements putting the player more than five yards behind the free-kick line will be called prior to the kick (e.g. foot behind the 35 or other back line, looping run that puts a player more than five yards back). Again, let’s not split hairs. The mantra is “substantial and noticeable.”
 - e. If a player is more than five yards back in his initial positioning, he will be considered the kicker for administrative purposes; if, however, he does not kick the ball, the play will be declared dead at the time the ball is kicked.
 - f. This rule will be enforced **from the Ready for Play until kick** in order to avert unnecessary contact by teams.

II. Targeting and defenseless players

A. Targeting

The following guidelines may be used to call targeting:

1. An upward lunge by a player with contact to head-neck area;

2. Lowering the head with contact to head-neck area or contact lower, with an upward thrust of head to head-neck area.
3. Airborne player who makes contact to head or neck area with helmet, forearm, fist elbow, etc.
4. A runner who uses his helmet as a battering ram and makes contact to head-neck area.
5. A player who lines up an opponent and hits him when both are obviously out of the play (when contact is to head or neck area).
6. Hitting a player with any of these motions with contact below head-neck area (including by the runner) is not targeting, but could be illegal helmet contact if primary contact is with the helmet.

Note: When contact is made, judgment should be used as to the positions of the individual players. A defender who commits to contact to the head or neck area is obviously committing a foul. What must be seen as well is the action by the ball carrier or opponent. Did the opponent alter or lower his target area by dipping his head, dropping his shoulder, or ducking his body? If so, you may not have a foul.

B. Defenseless player include but are not limited to:

1. Passers who have not moved into the play;
2. Players who are trailing play, but not actively engaged;
3. Kickers who have just kicked the ball but have regained their balance;
4. Place-kick holders;
5. Kick-receivers in the process of receiving a kick;
6. Players obviously out of the play;
7. Pass receivers when the pass is out of reach.
8. Contact is not necessarily a foul. Judgment has to be used as to intent of player making the contact.

Note 1: In all cases we should err on the side of targeting or hitting a defenseless player, but not use it as a default position.

Note 2: Officials should confer when a targeting foul is flagged to affirm it is targeting, especially if a disqualification is possible. This should include the calling official and any other official who might have seen the play. At least two officials should be in the conference, with the possibility of three or more. In any case, if a DQ is contemplated, officials should confer and affirm the decision before reporting

it to the referee. A disqualification should not be reported without a conference among the nearest officials.

III. Roughing the passer

- A. Any personal foul on a passer while he is the passer has been clarified as Roughing the Passer.
 - 1. This does not include the five-yard facemask.
 - 2. Referees should reinforce their knowledge of the definition of a passer. He is a passer from the time he releases the ball until the pass ends (complete, incomplete or intercepted), or when he moves to participate in the play (2-32-11).
 - 3. Penalty enforcement is from the dead-ball spot beyond the neutral zone and no change of team possession; otherwise, spot is the previous spot (9-4-4 penalty).

IV. Mechanics

- A. Kickoffs:
 - 1. We have returned the 2011 kickoff alignment with one exception. The Back Judge will move from the sideline toward the near hash mark after the kick is clearly away. He will then officiate inside-out, concentrating on the area of the field from about midfield to the R-30, looking for illegal blocks. He is primary on the goal line.
 - 2. Use of microphone

Schools are beginning to install microphone technology, and some games are televised. With this in mind, the interpreters came up with these guidelines.

 - a. CIAC has prohibited calling number.
 - b. R should report foul, team and yardage and down.
 - c. Microphone should be used to explain unusual plays or situations.
 - d. Clock problems or resets should be announced by Referee.
 - e. Timeouts should be reported with number of timeouts remaining.
 - f. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, Referee should give explanation of options and the one enforced.

3. The Play Clock

A. Similar to microphones, some schools and municipal fields have installed play-clock technology. These are operated either from the press box along side the game clock, or by the Back Judge by use of a toggle. The following recommendations have been requested:

1. Play clock operators wait a “one-one thousand” count before starting clock.
2. Back Judges wait for “zero plus one” before throwing flag for delay.
3. If clock is not off the field, it must be under control of B by use of toggle or other device.

B. Back Judge and final signal

Let’s try to be consistent on administration of fouls prior to kickoff. If there is a foul to be assessed on the kick, or if there is encroachment, the Referee will:

1. In the case of an assessment on the TD, try or successful field goal:
 - a. give the preliminary signal;
 - b. point to the offending team; and
 - c. point to the middle of the field if the foul will be assessed on the kick.
2. The Back Judge will:
 - a. get the ball, wait until the kicking team is on the field;
 - b. assess the penalty from the 40-yard line; and
 - c. give the final signal, pointing to the offended team.

This is the Back Judge’s face time and it looks a lot better if it’s done correctly and crisply.

That’s it for now.