

2014 Football Bulletin IX

Oct. 31, 2014

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

From: Bill Riccio, Jr. State Interpreter

Re: Various stuff

I. SHOK Book II

A. Punt plays

We've had some interesting plays in the punting game, and more than a few questions. Here's one that happened, and it took a lot of explaining to get the point across.

K 4/8 on the K-30, a punt is partially blocked and hits the ground beyond the neutral zone at the K-33. The ball is bouncing around and possibly hit an R player (it didn't). K44 picks it up and runs with it. Ruling: R ball 1/10 on the K-33.

While it's an easy call for an official, you'd be surprised how many players, fans, and even some coaches don't get the concept that a kick cannot be advanced by the kicking team, no matter what happens, when the ball is beyond the neutral zone.

Remember: in NFHS rules the ball in relation to the line determines whether K can pick it up and run with it. So, if the ball bounced back behind the neutral zone K can pick it up and advance it.

Referees should cover all the possibilities in the pre-game conference (e.g. when the ball is touched by R beyond the neutral zone and bounces back, etc.).

NCAA Difference: If you're working a prep school game that uses NCAA rules, if the ball touches anything beyond the neutral zone and bounces back, it's considered to have crossed. K cannot advance the ball, only recover it, no matter where the ball is recovered.

- B. Punt from the 50, receiver muffs the ball at the 2, and the ball finds its way into the end zone. Ruling: The muff doesn't change the status of the ball as a kick. A kick that goes into the end zone is a touchback.

The question came up, what if the ball is batted backward into the end zone does it change the force or status? Answer: The force does not come into question because the status of the ball is still a kick. So, (there is a case book play 8.5.3 Situation B) the ball is still a touchback. In the heat of the moment, this could be a confusing one.

II. "Trick" plays

A. Forward handing

These next two came by way of youth football:

1. One coach had a trick play, where the center would not release the ball to the QB, take the ball and run up the middle. He was shocked to learn it was an illegal play. As we all know for a lineman to get a forward hand off, he has to turn toward his end line take at least one step toward the backfield and then get the handoff.

Needless to say with all those requirements, this play is not seen very often.

B. PAT/Field goals

1. A coach had a play where the holder for a PAT/FG would from his knee toss the ball to another player. He was upset when he was told it couldn't be done under high school rules. That didn't stop him, he tried it anyway, got whistled for it, and the opponent took the ball over on downs.

NCAA difference: As long as the kicker is in position to kick, the holder can do just about anything.

III. Sideline Control -- yet again

- A. Be consistent – Some crews are doing a great job on sideline control and keeping coaches and players out of the "working area" of the six-foot restricted zone while the ball is in play. Others are not, and coaches are noticing. Coaches are going to take as much as we give them, and if we're going to allow them on the field, they'll take it. We have to keep the

sidelines clear so we can officiate without having to dodge people. The sideline warning is a way to get control quickly. Don't give a warning in the fourth quarter, give it early.

Mechanic: Throw the flag on the warning. It serves notice.

Note: The crews that are not keeping control of the sidelines are making it difficult for the crews that are trying to keep the area cleared. We have to be consistent crew-wide, board-wide, statewide.

That's it for now,

Bill R.