

2015 Football Bulletin IV
October 8, 2015

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

From: Bill Riccio, Jr. State Interpreter

Re: Two-week update

I. Batting

A. The call in the NFL game this week, had many officials talking about batting. The thing that came up was whether the bat in the end zone was a deliberate act or a muff. Batting is a deliberate act by definition, and the calling official has to make that determination. NFHS rules are very limited as to what can be batted:

1. A scrimmage kick in flight may be batted in or behind the neutral zone in order to block it;
2. A scrimmage kick in flight may be batted toward Ks' own goal line as long as no R player is in position to make a catch (9-7-2 exception);
3. A grounded scrimmage kick may be batted toward a player's own goal line;
4. Passes in flight may be batted in any direction, except the passing team may not bat a backward pass forward.+

Remember the bat does not change the status of the ball. If it is a fumble, it remains a fumble after the bat. This is important because it helps determine the basic spot for the penalty enforcement. Make sure the crew is on the same page.

Batting rules usually drive officials nuts. Review the batting rules at your meetings and during pregame conferences.

II. Interval Fouls

A. When calling fouls, officials have to know when a foul is called, particularly if it is during an interval. A pass-run play has two intervals,

the pass portion of the play, which becomes a running play after the ball is caught or intercepted. Fouls called during the pass interval have the basic spot as the previous spot, while fouls called during the run have the end of the run as the basic spot. That is why a calling official should have in this case who, what, where and when as his reporting checklist.

- B. The same is true during kick plays. Get the interval right and the enforcement of a foul is a no-brainer.

III. Dead-ball fouls

- A. We saw a play from an out-of-state game where the officials got the enforcement of a dead-ball foul wrong, and gave a team a new series of downs.

Play: 4/7 from the B-30. QB A11 throws a legal forward pass to receiver A88 near the sideline. The ball goes off A88's hands and falls incomplete B29 comes in and is called for a defenseless player foul against A88. Ruling: The foul is a dead-ball foul. The series is over. B is penalized 15 yards from the succeeding spot (the spot of the snap) 1/10 from the B-15.

This is an example of another interval foul, and officials have to be sure when they call this foul.

Reminder, the next play is 1/10 not 1/25 as long as the Ready for Play beginning the next series has not been given.

IV. Lining up receivers, teams

- A. With the advent of spread formations, we have to be more cognizant of who is on the line and who is in the backfield. The general rule is if the receivers are staggered they are considered in the backfield. If the wing official isn't sure, then neither is the defensive team. One of those receivers may be ineligible because he is not clearly in the backfield. Get this play early before it becomes a problem.
- B. Teams still may line up receivers on the line on purpose. This is nothing more than a variation of an end-over play. That means it's probably a run to that side.
- C. The flag for ineligible receivers (by position) going down field should not be thrown until a forward pass crosses the neutral zone. If it is a pass behind the neutral zone, no rule is violated. If the pass is in doubt, throw

the flag, and then check with the U to see whether the ball crossed the line or not.

- D. On scrimmage plays or scrimmage kick plays, don't let the offensive line bow back to the point there are not seven players on the LOS. Offensive linemen get a definite advantage in making their blocks if lined up too far back. Warn them once, and then penalize.
- E. On scrimmage kick plays no warning is necessary. This is a play that is becoming more and more prevalent. Bowing back on punt and FG/PAT plays gives K an advantage, and should be called.

V. Communication with sidelines

- A. The best way to make an easy game hard is for a wing official to have no communication with the sidelines. Coaches have questions and need information, and must be dealt with in a courteous and professional manner. Wing officials should initiate the information, especially on penalties, time-outs and any other matter where information is needed. The biggest complaint coaches have is officials are not talking to them.
- B. Referees should talk with both sidelines if there is an unusual or complicated rule. A good way to diffuse a situation is take the initiative on a strange situation, and talk to the coach. Just remember, if you talk to one side, go to the other side as well.

That's it for now,

Bill