

2016 CFOA Football Bulletin II
August 17, 2016

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

From: Bill Riccio, Jr. State Interpreter

Re: Interpreters Meeting, State Clinic

I. State Interpreters meeting

Representatives of the six member boards of the CFOA meet on Tuesday, Aug. 9 to discuss enforcement of the new rules, and possible changes in mechanics. The following decisions were made, some of which were discussed at the state clinic on Aug. 13.

A. New Rules

1. Clipping -- It was agreed that for the new clipping rule, the buttocks or below would be used as the key element of clipping inside the Free Blocking Zone. This will make it easier for the calling official.
2. Mouth guards and gloves – A quick review of this rule was given. The calling is self-evident. A reminder that cloth gloves or gloves used for warmth are not subject to a label.

B. Points of Emphasis

1. The only POE that needed discussion was the uniform as it relates to covering the shoulder pads and back pads. We agreed the shoulder pad problem was more one of design than neglect. We will continue to monitor the shoulder pads and have players pull the sleeves down. There was no support for flagging these problems, nor for calling a penalty against the coach.
2. The back pad is a different story. We will monitor this and insist the players keep the pad covered and tuck in their jerseys. Officials will send players off to the sideline and let the coach handle after the players has been warned no more than twice.

C. Manual

1. The new signals offered in the manual were not supported for inclusion in our mechanics. These new signals are suggested not mandatory. It was believed the current signals, especially the five-second "hand up," was better and less prone to problems than the basketball count-down proposed in the book.
2. We are to encourage and ask schools to turn horns off for football games, and, if possible, tenths of seconds in the final minute. ECOs will be alerted and find out if one or both can be done prior to the game.

D. Manual Points of Emphasis

1. Targeting will, once again get our attention. Last year the reports from all over the state were good. Officials were aware of the rule and its intent.
2. The restricted area continues to be a problem. Coaches have to be reminded to vacate the six-foot area between the 25s. Contact, however, will result in a 15-yard penalty from the succeeding spot as defined by rule.
3. Officials were encouraged to shut a play down if a down indicator was incorrect prior to the snap or approximate to the snap. Better to shut down and make sure things are right than have a series be incorrectly numbered.

E. New Issues

1. Catch/No Catch – The state will use the "complete the process" interpretation, similar to that used in many states. The NFHS has sought to change its catch rule to conform with the other codes, but editorial and case book plays will take many man-hours of work. This interpretation is consistent with that desire, and still within the current definitions in the rulebook.

A receiver must have control, land with one foot and maintain control when contacting the ground throughout the process of the catch. This is true in the end zone, and along the sideline.

When the ground is not involved, a receiver must alight to the ground if airborne, get his balance and "make a football move (step or steps) with

control. A hit that comes at the time of the foot alighting to the ground with loss of possession is an incomplete pass. Interpreters will go over this during the pre-season and during the season proper. We have to be consistent on this one. The Arizona tape shown at the clinic should be shown by each board during regular chapter meetings.

Here are a few examples:

Play 1: Receiver A1 is running a crossing pattern and has a legal forward pass grasped in his outstretched hands and attempts to pull it into his body. He's hit and loses possession of the ball. Ruling: Incomplete.

Play 2: Receiver A1 is running a crossing pattern and has a legal forward pass grasped in his outstretched hands and pulls the ball into his body. He is hit just as he brings the ball into his body. He loses possession of the ball. Ruling: Incomplete.

Play 3: Receiver A1 is running a crossing pattern and has a legal forward pass grasped in his outstretched hands and pulls it into his body. He turns and (a) takes a step, or (b) continues on his run. He is hit and loses possession of the ball. Ruling: Completion and fumble.

Note: Once a "football move" is made with possession, taking one, two or three steps and losing the ball denotes player possession. Any subsequent loss of the ball is a fumble by definition.

Play 4: Airborne receiver A1 has a legal pass grasped is hit and makes contact with the ground, where he loses possession on contact. Ruling: Incomplete pass.

Play 5: Airborne receiver A1 has a legal pass grasped is hit and falls to the ground. Once in contact with the ground, he rolls and loses possession. Ruling: Incomplete pass. The receiver must retain possession throughout the "process of the catch."

Note: Once he makes contact with the ground, if he loses possession while continuing the action of the catch, he must retain possession throughout.

Play 6: Airborne receiver A1 has a legal pass grasped is hit, but retains his feet. Once on the ground he turns or begins a run, taking one or several steps, while the ball is in his possession. He is hit again and loses the ball. Ruling: Fumble.

Note: Once possession is established by "making a football move," loss of player possession results in a fumble by definition.

Play 7: Airborne receiver near the sideline has a legal forward pass grasped, is hit and goes to the ground, where he rolls out of bounds. During the roll, he loses possession. Ruling: Incomplete pass. He must retain possession throughout the process of making the catch.

Note: The same is true if this play took place in the end zone. Loss of possession results in an incomplete pass.

These are just a few of the situations that can happen and are not intended to be a complete overview. This should give officials the flavor of what we are trying to accomplish. It should make catch/no catch an easier call.

NOTE 1: Officials have to take everything slower and watch the catch process before making a ruling. Once the determination is made, the official will give the proper signal (we do not use a “catch” signal) for the incompleteness, TD, first down, or otherwise.

NOTE 2: When in question, the ball is incomplete. This does not preclude a discussion among the covering officials, and a ruling of complete. However, if officials are unsure, the play is incomplete.

2. Kickoff Coverage – There was no support for deviating from the manual regarding kickoff coverage. The manual will be the formation used by officials during Free Kicks. However, there has always been the option of the crew to adjust to a kicker. That adjustment should not move the U closer than the 10 on his side of the field or closer than the 20 on the HL’s side of the field.

The coverage is designed to facilitate area coverage ahead of the first tier of receivers and into the second tier. That is where blocks in the back, holds and other violations occur most often.

3. Pass Coverage – A review of pass coverage was discussed and there is no change on keys for wings or the B. The B will retain keying on widest man in the formation or the widest two with trips.
4. The CIAC Score Management Policy – This was discussed and handed out to those present. It will be included in the upcoming bulletin for distribution to chapter members. We were informed the Central Connecticut Conference has decided to use a 35-point differential in both the third and fourth periods. If there are intersectional games the CIAC rule will apply.
5. Blocking Below the Waist – We reiterated the interpretation that came last year regarding BBW when a team is in a shotgun formation and linemen are in a two-point stance. There can be no blocking below the waist, even if on the initial charge as the Rules Committee considers this “nearly impossible.” Nearly impossible is impossible. We are not allowing it.
6. Team control
 - A. Disrespecting opponents – We will continue with the procedure established two years ago. Visiting teams may not come onto a field and show disrespect by spearing, hammering or stomping on a team’s logo at center field. Demonstrations on one’s own sideline, however, are tolerated as long as they are not directed at the opponent in some unsportsmanlike way. Officials will penalize such acts at the opening

kickoff and the foul is on the head coach as a first unsportsmanlike conduct foul.

Note: One board requested a more stringent procedure than the one we are currently using. That request will go before the Football Committee of the CIAC for further discussion.

II. State Clinic

The State Clinic was conducted at West Haven High School on Saturday, Aug. 13 with close to 200 officials, coaches and representatives of the CIAC. We thank, in particular, Football Committee chairman Leroy Williams and CIAC Officials Association Joe Tonelli for their attendance.

All six boards gave presentations in both the position breakout and the rotation portion of the clinic. A special clinic was given to nearly 30 new candidates from the member boards, dealing with the basic of officiating, and answering their questions.

III. NCAA changes

The new NCAA rules regarding blocking have been overhauled again, further restricting blocking below the waist. Those boards servicing prep schools using the NCAA books with modification should review the new rules. The low blocking zone has been eliminated and the tackle box is now the definer of those who are unrestricted blockers.

Of interest, tripping a runner is no longer legal in this code, similar to the NFL rule.

Sliding players have been added to the list of defenseless players.

There are other changes, but mostly clarifications of existing rules.

That's it for now, have a great pre-season.

Bill Riccio, Jr.

State Interpreter