

2016 CFOA Football Bulletin IV

Oct. 5, 2016

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

From: Bill Riccio, Jr. State Interpreter

Re: Varia

I. Rules, Interpretations

A. Illegal Blindside Block

1. We have had a few situations on blindside blocks that were called illegal, but were legal. Not all blindside blocks are the same. If we go back to the CFOA Guidelines and the Matt Sumstein video that was distributed to the boards and used at the State Clinic, open-hands, heads-up push blocks are screen blocks are legal, and not subject to penalty.
2. We are looking to penalize missile-style, hunter-like blocks that are lining opponents up. The key is the position of the player making the block: the hands are down; the helmet and shoulder are used to deliver a "blow up" block.

B. Protecting the Passer

1. **The NFHS code considers the player who passes a defenseless player because of the focus of his action and attention.**
2. **Referees, particularly, have to be attentive to protecting the passer or potential passer while he's in the passing posture. This includes before, during and after the pass is thrown. "Passing posture" for our purposes will mean the player's set-up and position in order to throw the pass.**
3. **Other codes have rules for this; the NFHS has yet to add rule support – other than defenseless player and unnecessary roughness.**
4. **If a passer in is posture to throw, even though he is technically the ball carrier, referees have to watch the manner and type of hit.**

- a. A defender who attempts to get to the passer while he's the in pocket and goes at or below the knees with the helmet or shoulder is committing a foul. This is not a *bone fide* effort to stop a runner so much as to inflict injury. This is true whether the pass is thrown or not.
- b. On a roll-out the same is true. If the passer sets up, he is in the passing posture. If the defender attempts to contact with only the helmet or shoulder at the knees or below, there is a foul.
 1. In both cases if the ball is not thrown, it's unnecessary roughness.
 2. If the ball is thrown, it's roughing the passer.
 3. If the hit is flagrant, the player is subject to ejection.
 4. If the defender in both above cases leads with his hands to make a wrap or grab at or below the knees, it is legal.
 5. A potential passer who becomes a runner is subject to the same hits as any other runner.

C. Blocks Below the Waist

1. A reminder: linemen in three-point or four-point stances in a shotgun formation may make a charge block or fire-out block below the waist.
2. In a two-point stance, no lineman may make a block below the waist.

D. Illegal Shifts

1. Officials should review the shift rules when discussing running plays in pregame conferences. Back may not go into motion until all 11 players are set for a second. We're seeing situations where linemen or still going down into their final stances, and backs are going into motion without ever stopping again to reset the formation. This must be called.

II. Mechanics

Umpires – In a five-man crew the U must become the primary determiner of whether a pass is caught behind or beyond the neutral zone. They have to get up to the line once they read pass. This is necessary because during the course of the play, the wings, particularly the Head Linesman, can lose the LOS because of the development of the play. Contact by defenders in or behind the neutral zone are not Pass Interference, but may be something else

(holding, illegal use of hands, etc.). Once the U has found the line, he signals the wings it is a catch in or behind the line by punching back.

Wings – The mechanics one wing men start with the officials working off the sideline. We are seeing situations where wings are starting to creep into the field. The six-foot area was adopted by the Rules Committee to protect the officials. The Manual Committee has adopted procedures to conform to the rules. Please work off the field to start, moving onto the field in such cases as necessary (off-ball officiating, pinching in on close plays, etc.).

Referees – The recommended position of a Referee on any scrimmage play is at least 12-14 yards back and 5-9 yards outside the TE position extended. This gives officials the cushion they need to watch their keys, observe the snap action, and keep the backs in their vision. Some Referees are playing up to close and too much inside the formation. This restricts visibility and can box a Referee out of a play.

Back Judges – Be consistent on 25-second counts throughout the game.

Football is a game of rhythm and cadence. If the crew keeps the same tempo, the game gets a flow, and runs much better. A key component of that is a consistent 25-second count.

That's it for now. I plan on having a bulletin every two weeks through the rest of the season.

Bill R.