**2022 CFOA Football Bulletin I**

**August 8, 2023**

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

From: Bill Riccio, Jr. State Interpreter

Re: Clinic Notes, Interpreters’ Meeting, Clarifications

1. **Clinic Notes**

The 2023 CFOA State Clinic took place at East Haven High School, Aug. 5. The new format of breakout sessions replacing outdoor stations worked well, with officials happy with the more interactive discussions.

1. Rules Changes – Several rule changes were discussed.
2. **Rule 1-5-3a(5)a4, 5 Towels**: Solid color towels are acceptable, and no longer must be the same. Towels can measure 4 x 12-inches; or 18 x 36 inches. If they exceed these measurements, officials were told to have the player tuck in the excess to comply. Let’s not get into a discussion of towels, especially with coaches.
3. **Rule 2-29-1 Clarifies player who is inbounds:** This rule now is consistent with all levels of football. A player who goes out of bounds, either on his own, or is forced out by an opponent, must return to the field and “touch up” any part of his body inbounds, without any other part of his body touching out of bounds. The plays in the Casebook deal mostly with players who go out on their own, and whether they are guilty of illegal participation. However, this can happen:

**Play 1:** A88 is running a pass pattern and is forced out of bounds by B34. A11 throws a pass in A88’s direction, which is high. Before A88 can “touch up” inbounds, he leaps for the ball, and catch it, or muffs it before returning to the ground inbounds. Ruling: Incomplete pass as soon as he touches the ball in both cases.

**Play 2:** A88 is running a pass pattern and goes out of bounds on his own. A11 throws a pass in A88’s direction, which is high. He leaps for the ball, and either catches or muffs it. Ruling: Incomplete pass. No Illegal participation should be called (interpretation).

The Casebook makes the case this may be illegal participation in the second play. Let’s try to stay away from that call unless it is a blatant attempt to deceive by staying out of bounds. Let’s go with the incomplete pass only if the stepping out of bounds is incidental, rather than intentional.

**NB:** Mechanically, the spot where the player went out of bounds should be marked by the official covering the play, even if he is forced out. We must tell the players, coaches, and fans we saw what happened.

1. **2-32-16d Defenseless Receivers:** The interpreters came up with guidelines on this rule adjustment, as the Rules Committee is informing officials how it wants this called.

**Guidelines on calling new clarification on defenseless receivers.**

1. What to look for:
2. See the entire play through before throwing a flag;
3. “Forcefully contacted” is crux of new clarification;
4. If the player is hit with hands down, head down and any part of shoulder or body contact, opponent is liable for a foul.
5. The principle of “Hands out, head up contact,” like the blindside block, is always legal as is any attempt to “wrap up” the receiver.

**NB: A receiver who is wrapped or in the process of being tackled legally is still “defenseless.” If a second player comes in and makes a tackle that is illegal, that hit is a foul under this rule.**

1. De-cleating, shoulder to back, or any contact that uses the helmet as a weapon is a foul.
2. Look for opponent of receiver to be in “chase mode.”
3. A receiver who retains his feet and continues to play may help indicate if this is a foul or not.
4. Targeting may be involved in these types of hits.
5. Once a receiver has established himself as a runner by making a “football move” he is no longer defenseless. Officials must observe the play and make sure he has had that opportunity.
6. When in doubt, it is a foul.
7. **7-5-2d, Exception 2:** Legally throwing the ball out of bounds to conserve yardage.
8. Possessed ball must be carried beyond the FBZ extended (four yards);
9. Ball must be thrown beyond the neutral zone. If ball is thrown out of bounds it must cross the NZ extended out of bounds;
10. Only the player who possesses the snap can throw the ball to conserve yardage.
11. If two players attempt to gain a snap, the player who gains control is the passer under this rule.
12. A pitch-back option is no longer legal under this rule.
13. **10-4 Basic Spots:** The easiest way to discuss this, the All-But-One Principle that governed penalty enforcement is all but gone.
14. This space is not going to go over all the changes in the rule. Suffice it to say the inequities in the enforcements have been eliminated.
15. Runs that end behind the line with a Team B foul will go back to the previous spot for enforcement.
16. Similarly, holds or other “contact” fouls by Team A behind the previous spot, will be penalized from the previous spot. Gone is the hold 7 yards behind the LOS, and the penalty tacked on from there.
17. However, if a hold occurs in Team A’s end zone. That is a safety as it has been as the rule for such fouls is specific. 10-4-4e.
18. Non-contact fouls, such as illegally batting the ball, will be penalized from the spot of the foul if behind the previous spot.
19. Penalties such as “Unsportsmanlike conduct” or other such fouls have their own spots by rule.

**NOTE: A Clarification memo and reinterpretation was sent to all boards on Aug. 7 from the NFHS. The chart on page 83 incorrectly uses the term “succeeding spot,” when the meaning is “end of the run or related run.” The term “succeeding spot” was picked up by the interpreters before the memo went out and was clarified at the clinic. The NFHS memo served to corroborate the issue.**

1. **Other points discussed.**

At the Interpreters’ Meeting prior to the clinic the following was determined:

1. **Uniforms, adornments**
2. Pants, determining legality:
   1. A player standing up should have knees covered by pants and pads.
   2. If the pants ride up uncovering the knee in some manner, they are still legal.
   3. Knee pads that are tucked under the pants, or pants rolled up to expose the knee result in the player’s dismissal from the field until it is resolved. QBs and kickers are most likely to do this, and it should be observed at every change of unit.
3. **Shirts:**
4. The sleeves on current jerseys may ride up on the epaulets of shoulder pads. This situation should be handled as we have in the past – having the player pull the sleeves back over the pads.
5. Shirts should be tucked in at the start of the game, and players who come into the game should have their shirts tucked. Midriffs should not be exposed at any time.
6. **Face paint:**
7. Officials will at the “pregame walk” ask the coach if he “understands the face paint/eye black rule.” A positive response is all that is required.
8. If players have face paint, officials will not “look for” the violation; however, if a player becomes a problem, the face paint can be used as a means of getting him under control.
9. **Scrimmage plays**
10. Quick attempts at QB sneak for 1st down or score:
11. Officials must be aware that all players are set for one second (count) before the ball is snapped;
12. QBs who never set under center, but get the snap while moving violate the shift rule.
13. Quick/sudden shifts to final sets:
14. Some teams attempt to lure the opponent into an encroachment foul by making a sudden shift from a two-point stance to a three- or four-point stance.
15. If the opponent stays on-side no foul;
16. If the shift caused an encroachment violation, foul on Team A.
17. Punt shifts
18. Teams that move suddenly from a tight kick formation into a spread, or spread to tight, must do so in a smooth fashion. If the move is such that it simulates the start of a play, the above principle applies.
19. **Points of Emphasis**
20. **Assisting the Runner:** This is becoming a bit of a problem. Officials should call this when a teammate physically lifts, pulls the runner. Pushing is a more difficult call and should only be called if “obvious.” Part of the “obvious” look would be extended arms into the ball carrier. The point is it must be so obvious there is no doubt.

If a player pushes into a pile, and not specifically the runner, we are not getting into that kettle of fish. It’s got to be obvious to everyone in the ballpark.

1. **Official/Coach Communications:** Officials should attempt to keep the sideline apprised of everything that is going on during a game, particularly in penalty enforcement, or a confusing situation. The communication starts from the time the official (particularly on a wing) comes onto the field. He should greet the coach and explain how he is going to communicate play situations. He should also explain his need for the sideline to be clear during plays and ask who the “get back” coach is.

Communication with the head coach is important to help short circuit any difficulties later in the game.

As we head toward the scrimmage season and opening night, other bulletins will be available as situations arise. That’s it for now.

Bill Riccio