

2009 SRI Bulletin #10

Kickoffs:

Question: Can a punt be used for the kickoff to start either half?

Answer: No, a punt may only be used for a free kick following a safety. Rule 6-1-2.

Extending the Period:

Play: A34 is tackled in his own end zone for a safety as time expires in the 2nd or 4th quarter. Is the quarter extended for the free kick following the safety?

Ruling: No, Rule 3-3-3 does not allow the quarter to be extended. Note, had this play been the last play of the 1st or 3rd quarter, then the free kick would be the first play of the 2nd or 4th quarter.

This will be the last SRI Bulletin for the regular season. There may be one post-season bulletin, probably after the 2nd round of playoff games. Thanks to all of you for sharing game situations and your rules and mechanics inquiries with me. I hope these Bulletins have been a useful addition to your local training programs. I know they have generated some spirited discussion amongst football officials throughout the state.

Because of several positive comments on last year's Bulletin heading into the playoffs, I am again sharing that information with you to review and remind ourselves of some basic officiating principles.

45-Point Rule:

The 45-point rule **WILL BE USED** throughout the playoffs until the final, championship games.

"Phantom" Calls:

Make sure you "see the whole play" and don't react to comments from the sidelines when you call a foul. Work to get yourself in the best possible position to see the play. Make sure the foul has an affect on the play unless player safety or unsportsmanlike conduct is involved. There is an old adage that "if you think it might have been a foul, then it probably wasn't." Action that appears to be a foul when observed late will turn out not to be a foul. Be 100% sure of what you see before you throw the flag. Sometimes, the best call is a no-call; it's easier to justify and explain a no-call than a "phantom" call.

Measurements:

Time is often lost on the game clock when Referees are deciding whether or not to measure for a first down. If the ball is that close, stop the clock and measure. Once you stop the clock to look, Referees should either measure or award a first down. If the ball is dead in a side zone, only the covering wing official should place the ball at his/her feet at the dead ball spot.

Blowing the Whistle:

Officials must be alert to the status of the ball before blowing the whistle. Make sure you see the player on the ground with the ball in possession before blowing the whistle. Remember, the whistle never kills the play. Action prior to the whistle being blown kills the play. Never **assume** the runner is down. Only the covering official should blow the whistle. No "mirroring" of whistles!

Upping the Ante:

Playoff games are more intense as teams look to advance towards championship games. Be confident in your rules and mechanics knowledge and always work to get in the proper position to make your calls. Be prepared for the unexpected, such as an onside kick on the opening kickoff. Concentration between downs will help you prepare for the next play. Keep calm, don't be influenced by excited coaches, players and fans. People will be looking to see how you respond under pressure. Remember, a calm official has a calming effect on those around you.

Dead Ball Officiating:

Be alert for fouls after the play is over. Remember the accordion effect and move towards the ball after the play is over, being on the lookout for dead ball fouls and action that could be a foul if players start to push and shove each other, chicken fight, or trash talk. Be a positive presence on the field.

Overtime:

Please review Rule Book pages 88-89 which talk about resolving tied games. In Oregon, the first two series of overtime start from the **25 yard line**; the third and ensuing series begin at the **10 yard line**. Halftime is a good time to review the overtime rules and procedures. Remember, you only toss the coin once in overtime, and ends of the field may change with each complete overtime series.

Professionalism:

In the playoffs, we will work games involving teams from outside our normal service areas. It is important to be professional in our contacts with players, coaches and school administrators. Represent your local association well!

Several associations will travel long distances to work their playoff games. Allow plenty of time for road and weather conditions. Many crews conduct their pre-game conference in the car on the road to the game site. That's fine, but allow enough time to unwind, change clothes in a relaxed manner and go over last minute details before the opening kickoff.

Final Thought:

The following microphone announcement was recently shared with me. "Will the clocker please reset the game clock to 1:34." Now, I don't know what a "clocker" is, but I suspect it is a cross between a timer and a clock operator.....

I hope all of you have had a great season; best of luck in your playoff games.