

2022 OHSAA Preseason Bulletin # 1 – A New Season!!

Welcome to the 2022 Football Season



Greetings!! It is just around the corner – one of the best times of the entire year – the start of the OHSAA Football Season!! As I drive around the state and visit with Crews, it is a similar message – “I wish the Football Season was starting tomorrow – I can’t wait!!” It never ceases to amaze me the level of dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work that our 2,945 Ohio HS Football Officials do yearly. On behalf of the 75,000 Student Athletes who play Interscholastic Football in Ohio, THANK YOU!!

Ohio Officials are Contenders Because They Want to Get Better. With great support by Local Associations OHSAA hosted eight FB Clinics last year. Over 1,125 officials attended. Congrats!!

Our new format for OHSAA State Rules Interpretation (SRI) Meetings began a few years ago and was a rousing success again last year. Officials had the opportunity to attend face-to-face meetings and receive credit for two meetings. Approximately half the meetings were devoted to NFHS New Rules/OHSAA Gold Book Mechanics and the other half of the meeting were game video clips with OHSAA Points of Emphasis placed on player safety, mechanics, and rulings. Over 1,000 officials took advantage of these highly informative “mini clinics” in Athens, Cleveland, Columbus, Findlay, Hamilton, New Philadelphia, Orrville, Toledo, & Wapakoneta. We would like to give a BIG thank you to those Local Associations who “stepped up to the plate” and helped us with the SRI Meetings last year.

One of our “key” statements again this year will be **EVERYONE OWNS THE RULES**. When a **Crew** steps onto the field all officials must have the mindset that we will “step up to the plate” and help our fellow **Crew** members with our knowledge and application of the NFHS FB Playing Rules & the OHSAA Regulations. Remember, we have no excuse for not knowing either a Rule or a Regulation. If you have any doubt about one of these, jog in, stop the GC, and discuss it with your fellow **Crew** members in an open and honest manner to “get it right.” The players & coaches will appreciate the extra time you take to discuss it.

This Guide is part of our continuing effort to standardize our mechanics throughout the State of Ohio. We are asking and expecting all officials to support our efforts to see that the Gold Book Mechanics are followed by every **Crew**. We have made great strides over the past years to standardize them.

Your wonderful ideas and suggestions for future improvements will be incorporated as we move forward as a TEAM to improve officiating in Ohio with one goal: Ohio High School Football Officiating will be the BEST in the nation.

Congratulations to Tom McNerlin, Jackson, who was selected as the 2022 NFHS Ohio Active Football Official of the Year. He has officiated FB/BB/SB for 34 years and officiated VB for 31 years. He has served as the Jackson FB/BB/SB/VB Officials Association Rules and or Mechanics Interpreter for 20 + years, and a Class Instructor for 20 + years in all four sports. He has officiated over 30 OHSAA State Playoff Games including the State Semifinals & Championship Games. Tom has served as the SE/E District Coordinator of Observers for 8 years and has served as a State Certified Observer for the past 12 years. Tom was inducted into the OHSAA HOF in 2016. He has served as a mentor to hundreds of officials, inviting many of them to his varsity games and working sub varsity with them. This award is presented to Tom for his outstanding Service to football officials throughout the State of Ohio.

Hope you have a Great FB Season this year!! Bruce Maurer, DOD

A Letter from the Director of Officiating & Sport Management

It has been a challenging couple of years in the officiating community. We have a reduced number of officials for the second year in a row and we need to increase our numbers to make interscholastic sports sustainable. I am grateful to all the football officials that remain certified and serve our student athletes. We continue to work very hard from our office to help our schools understand how important the officiating community is and how much they share in the service to our athletes. Safety remains the number one concern both for athletes and officials. I call on all of you to assist us in making interscholastic sports the best place to participate.

Playoff officiating opportunities will be expanded again this year as Regular Season Crews will work both the Week 11 & Week 12 Games. The format last year afforded many opportunities for officials to gain playoff experience. I hope that experience is shared with all officials in your local associations.

The biggest area of emphasis again in 2022 will once again be Rules Knowledge! I want to challenge each and every one of you to dedicate yourselves to improving your knowledge of the NFHS FB Rules. Take your Crew's and your roles seriously as to what Rules you are designated as the "expert" in the Gold Book Primary Responsibilities and expand your knowledge for all Rules.

Under the leadership of our Director of Development, Dr. Bruce Maurer, we have refined our football mechanics manual, The Gold Book. The GB helps us to become mechanically consistent across the state. We have refined these mechanics with your input and experience for this year. I appreciate the effort of all our football officials to continually improve in this area.

We can't make great calls unless we are looking in the right places. Challenge your Crew members and yourself to see the critical parts of each play. Ask each other, "Where are the important blocks on this play? Did we see them?" Talk in your pregame conferences and post-game conferences about plays, where you were looking, what you saw, and where you should be looking. I say this all the time, the more you understand the game, the better official you will become. We will be putting plays into video presentations that show the types of plays and fouls we are emphasizing. **We must do a better job of seeing illegal low blocks by both the DEFENSE and the OFFENSE!**

I very much enjoy travelling around this great state and watching high school football. I saw over 200 different officials last season. I continue to be grateful that you listen and want to continually improve. I look forward to seeing many of you at your games this season. Enjoy your season and please let me know how I can help you improve.

Beau Rugg, Director of Officiating and Sport Management

2022 OHSAA Points of Emphasis

1. Legality of Low Blocks by the defense and offense
2. Illegible receivers downfield on run-pass option plays
3. Penalty Enforcement – Fouls on Kicking Plays & Carry Over Fouls on Scoring Plays

2022 New & An Emphasis on OHSAA GB FB Regulations

Playoff Game Assignments: As we know the 2021 Playoffs were expanded by one week. The regular season is Weeks 1 -10 & the State Playoffs are Weeks 11 – 16. For the First time, the GREAT news is that Regular Season Crews will be scheduled to Officiate both Weeks 11 and/or 12. The Goal is for every regular season Crew to work at least one playoff game – either Weeks

11 or 12, or possibly Weeks 11 & 12. There are 336 games that will be played Weeks 11 & 12 this year.

Officials Authority & Payment of Game Fees (Game Cancellations): If an official is notified in route, or after the official arrives, & the contest is not started, the official will receive any travel stipend, but not the game fee. If, after the official arrives, and the game is started, & is interrupted due to weather or other reasons, & not completed on the day scheduled, the official will receive full payment. An official completing an interrupted contest on another day will receive full payment (Handbook for Officials, XI, 38).

Sub Varsity Modified Rules: If both teams agree not to punt the ball, the FB will be moved 35 YDS downfield from the SS.

Officials Required State Rules Interpretation Meetings and Education Credits: There will be face-to-face SRI meetings this year. All FB officials will need to meet this requirement either online or at a face-to-face meeting. For those officials who attend a face-to-face meeting they will receive BOTH a SRI Meeting Credit (1 needed) along with one Education Credit (of 4 needed). Please remember & use the term "Education Credit". This term was developed as an official can attend a Local Meeting, attend a clinic, or view an online presentation (2 will be available this year) other than the SRI Presentation. As in previous years 4 Education Credits are needed yearly to renew your officiating license.

Officials Required SRI Online Meeting: Online dates are July 20 (Beginning at 9AM) thru August 25 (must be finished by 11:59AM). From August 25 thru September 30 call OHSAA, pay \$50, and secure access to the SRI Site. Beginning October 1 special permission must be requested to gain access to the SRI site.

2022 New OHSAA GB State FB Requirements

Required Officials Uniform: There is one change to the FB Officials Uniform this year -- Orange bean bags (BB) are mandatory this year for all games. The orange bean bag is your personal BB thrown above head level on a fumble to prevent an IW & thrown by the **BJ** to mark the PSK Spot, as well as other situations indicated in the GB.

OHSAA Logo Change Affecting Officials: There will be NO officiating logo changes before the 2024 Season.

2022 New OHSAA GB Mechanics (Total of 15 New Mechanics – 5 are for 6 Person Mechanics)

6 Person Mechanics: There are significant changes to the 6 Person Mechanics for this year.

Ball Handling (6 Person): On long incomplete passes the **CJ** will retrieve a FB from his/her near sideline & relay it to the **U**, if needed.

Bean Bag (BB): Orange Bean Bags ONLY will be used this year. Also, there is no need for the **BJ** to throw a BB when the KT recovers the punt.

Dead Ball (6 Person): The **CJ** will Spot the FB on a Passer who is sacked behind the LOS. By Rule once the passer moves beyond the LOS is now a runner, & no longer a passer.

End of Period: The **LJ** will communicate with the **R** that the GC has the correct time to start the 2Q & 4Q. Unfortunately, we have had games where the ball is snapped & the GC has not yet been set with the correct time. All **Crew** members are responsible for the GC time at the start of each quarter.

Field Goal & Try-Kick (6 Person): The **CJ's** IP for a FGA & Try-Kick will be 8 YDS deeper than the holder & 5 YDS wide of the holder. This will give the **CJ** a much better angle to see any contact on the Center once he/she snaps the FB.

Field Goal & Try-Kick: The **R** needs to jog toward the players once the FGA is good or a Try-Kick is made. A VG mechanic for Preventive Officiating --- Our presence can make a big difference.

KO: Before the start of the 1Q & 3Q the **BJ** will NOT hand the FB to the kicker until the GC reads 12:00. Again, all **Crew** members are responsible for the GC time.

KO (HL & LJ IP): If the 1st KO is short of the – 20 YL, move to the – 10 YL for the next KO. If the FB is kicked between the – 20 YL & GL, then stay on the GL. We observe too many officials who move to the – 10 YL & then the FB is kicked deep & they do not move back to the goal line as needed for the challenging call at the pylon.

Penalty Enforcement (6 Person): On long FG's & long Try-Kicks the **CJ** will enforce any penalty. What is the definition of "long"? Each **Crew** will make that determination.

Pre Snap - PC: With a closed fist above his/her head the **BJ** will LOUDLY state 10 seconds. We observed some **BJ's** using this mechanic in the State Playoffs & it was well received by Coaches, Officials, & Players. Again, communication is so very important on the FB Field.

Pre Snap - PC (4 Person): The **R** will LOUDLY state 10 seconds. As we know the **U** will then wave his/her arm above his/her head and count down 5-4-3-2—1 on a 4 Person **Crew**.

Punt (6 Person): The **CJ's** IP is standing on the End Line when the punter is positioned between the – 5 YL & the GL, & 10 YDS wide. We know when the punter is positioned between the – 5 YL & the GL, the **R** is on the GL. This gives the **Crew** excellent coverage in case the punt is blocked or the snap is errant or muffed. Both the GL & EL will be covered for these very challenging calls.

Reverse (6 Person): The **CJ's** IP is standing on the End Line when the FB is snapped between the – 10 YL & - 15 YL. We know that the **R** is positioned on the GL, 10 YDS wide when the snap is between the - 10 YL & - 15 YL. Again, this gives us excellent coverage on both the GL & EL for these tough & critical calls.

Signaling: The **HL & LJ** will signal with 1 & 5 fingers for a REALLY unbalanced line during the pre-snap!!

Signaling: The **LJ** will signal by pointing downfield with his/her arm over his/her head for a first down. This signal is easy to see by coaches, officials, & players. We had Coaches remark last year during the State Playoffs that they appreciated the **LJ** giving this “easy to see” signal as it helped them in the Press Box know the down & distance, & thus could relay their play calls faster to the Coaches on the SL.

Your Rule Book & Case Book Are Your Friends – Please Use Them: Now with our excellent Rules Index in the Gold Book it is much easier to find a Rule. While discussing a video clip recently two very good and experienced officials cited the ruling. The **R** questioned their ruling. They were adamant of their ruling. Did they look it up after the game to be sure – No they did not. Upon arriving home the **R** checked both books. He was correct. Rather than being over confident, take a few minutes and review the books. It can be a “game changer” down the road in a tough and challenging game.

A Healthier You

Just 10 minutes of exercise helps you live longer. Recent Finding: More than 110,000 lives could be saved by adults over age 40 if they added just 10 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity to their daily routines. Even more lives would be saved if they increased that activity by 20 or 30 minutes daily. Research shows that even a very small amount of moderate-to-vigorous exercise can have a big impact on your health.

Bottom Line Personal

OHSAA Sideline

During a live ball all players, coaches, and non-players must be out of the restricted area (6' off the sideline). It is imperative that all officials enforce this Rule. When meeting with each Head Coach 35 minutes prior to the game secure the name of the "Get Back Coach." Request the Coach's cooperation with keeping the team personnel out of the restricted area. Issue/assess sideline warnings early in the game when it is necessary. We have learned from experience that early warnings usually prevent having to issue warnings or yardage penalties later in the game. Be mindful of this Quote: "Be Respected rather Than Liked by Coaches."

Walk Further – Payoff – A Longer Life

From cars to escalators, we've eliminated physical activity from our lives. Adding back 150 weekly minutes of moderate activity – like, say, gardening or a brisk walk – can reduce our risk of dying prematurely by 30%, according to an analysis of more than 1,200 studies.

Try doing what only 2% of us do: Take the stairs – or perhaps carry your groceries or park in the farthest spot – and sneak small, effortful wins into your days. Researchers found that the most inactive people see the biggest benefits from doing just a little more.

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NFHS vs NCAA Football Rules and the Mistakes Made

As officials, we hear comments from players, coaches and fans from time to time but mostly when we have a very challenging call. Usually, the comments are not of a positive nature and when you think about it, there is one or two ways to explain the situation. One, the individual making the comment has no understanding of the Rule we just applied or two, we the officials, kicked the Rule and blew the call. If a Rule is not fully understood, we can always communicate to the players and coaches the correct interpretation and in some cases, if mic'd, we can give a short explanation to the crowd.

But what happens when their comments are correct? When we have actually kicked or misapplied a Rule. Our first step should be to understand why we kicked that Rule. Did we just not know or understand the Rule or would the enforcement have been correct had it been a Saturday college game vs. tonight's local high school game.

In today's officiating world, it is not uncommon for officials to work both high school games on Friday night and an NCAA game on Saturday. It is a natural progression for those officials who aspire to advance from the high school game to the college ranks, and maybe someday, work at the professional level.

Officiating NFHS and NCAA football games during the same season has to come with a tremendous challenge of knowing and understanding which Rules applies to which game. Yes, it means those officials will need to learn and understand two different sets of Rules, as there are many differences. For the officials who officiate at both levels there is a need to develop a study skill/guide which works best for them when it comes to separating the two and applying the Rules properly. For the purposes of this article we interviewed a few of those officials and asked the following:

- What Rule differences are the most confusing to you as both a high school and a college official?
- What penalty enforcements are the most confusing as well?

Here is a short summary to outline what those officials identified as some of the most commonly confused Rules and penalty enforcements for them on Friday night.

- Personnel Fouls are administered differently
 - PF by B at the college level are automatic first downs, not so in high school
 - The targeting PF at the college level is an automatic ejection, not so in high school
- Fouls by A behind the LOS
 - NCAA Rules administer these fouls from the previous spot always while high school use the All-But-One Principle
- Fouls by the opponent of the scoring team
 - High school rules allow for these penalties to be enforced on the Try or subsequent KO and keeping the score while college requires the penalty to be declined to keep the score
- Hurdling
 - In high school, no player shall hurdle an opponent who is touching the ground with nothing other than one or both feet. In the NCAA, there is no foul for Hurdling
- Kick catch interference
 - In the NCAA, there is no foul for Kick Catch Interference, if no player is in position to catch a free kick. However, in NFHS the ball must travel 10 yards and must touch the ground before K can possess it and no K player shall touch a free kick in flight

As you can see, those were just a few examples of how the NFHS Rules differ from the NCAA Rules, so we can see how the confusion can happen.

Anyone who officiates football knows there are many Rule differences between high school and college. So how do we avoid the mistake of applying an NCAA Rule in a Friday night high school game? In addition, a more specific question is how we avoid the mistake in an OHSAA Playoff Game where a higher percentage of the officials used belong to the group who work both NFHS and NCAA games. An article, which simply explains the differences between the Rules, would be long.

We can feel the pressure when standing in the middle of a packed stadium, discussing a challenging play, each involved official describing what he or she saw and deciding on the correct enforcement or ruling. Then throw in a couple different opinions and Rule differences, NFHS and NCAA, and you have the makings of something possibly being enforced incorrectly.

There are many excellent NFHS and NCAA Officials in Ohio, who do a great job of differentiating the two sets of Rules, but it does happen. I am sure OHSAA has examples of “high school only” crews kicking Rule applications as well. So how does a good crew avoid a rule misapplication whether you are all high school officials or a mixture with college officials? Is it enough for us to just realize the potential and identify those Rules that cause confusion in our pregame so we feel we are better prepared to apply the correct Rule. A well informed pregame is essential but here are a few other suggestions for “contending” crews:

- Follow the GB requirement of being a “Rules Expert” for your Crew position – GB pg. 7, item 12
- Get together during a game when needed to discuss a challenging call
 - The group should include the officials who saw the play plus any other official (s) who can add valuable insight
 - Everyone in the discussion needs to be heard regardless of their years of experience. It is the responsibility of the Referee to make sure each official is given a chance to speak
- Discuss challenging rules with your Crew during the week and bring that discussion to your pregame on Friday and/or Saturday.
- Make sure you have a field pack which includes the NFHS Rules Book, Case Book and the OHSAA Gold Book for each and every game
- Complete a study review of those challenging calls as soon as possible while the play is fresh in your mind
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We are all human and any of us can make a mistake but when a football crew makes a mistake then 5 or 6 officials made that mistake. We should work hard each and every week to be as prepared as possible to give the players our best.

Good luck this upcoming season, stay healthy and prepared.

Written by: Brad Huntley and Greg Bartemes

“The Gridiron” – A Historical Perspective of Football

In the early beginnings of football, the game was more of a rugby contest with no lines on the field, just boundary lines around it. The Rules also allowed the team with the ball to keep it until they scored or decided to give it over to the other team. This resulted in a famous “stalling” game where one team kept the ball the whole first half and then the other team kept the ball the entire second half, resulting in a tie 0 - 0. This tactic did not go over well with both teams, the spectators, or the press.

This resulted in “downs” becoming part of the Rules in 1882. The Rule stipulated that a team must advance the ball five yards in three downs or turn the ball over to the other team. This Rule required the marking of the field with lines every five yards to assist the Referee who was obligated under the new Rule to decide whether the yardage for a new series was gained. There was only one Referee who enforced the rules. He did have two judges, but they had no power to call fouls. They could only provide information if requested by the Referee. Also at this time, there were no yardage chains so the officials marked the ball’s forward progress with a handkerchief.

In 1903 the Rules were changed allowing the first player receiving the ball from the snapper to cross the neutral zone after he was five yards to the left or right from where the ball was snapped. Previously, the player could not advance the ball across the neutral zone. This Rule change required the marking of the field with lines intersecting the yard lines every five yards. The field was marked to assist players in complying with the Rule and to help officials enforce the Rule. This marking of the field every five yards from goal line to goal line and side line to side line resulted in the field looking like a “gridiron” or checkerboard. This “grid” design stayed a rule for quite a few years and resulted in referring to the field as the “gridiron.”

Even today you will hear announcers and others refer to the field as --- “The Gridiron.”

Provided by Larry Clemmons

NFHS Case Book Change, Page 78, 9.3.2 Situation F

Delete the RULINGS (a), (b), & (c). The correct Rulings for (a), (b), & (c) are “Illegal Chop Block by A-2”. A better reference would be 2-3-8.