



**Montana Officials Association**  
**MHSA 1 South Dakota Avenue**  
**Helena, MT 59601 406-442-6010**

August 2023

**TO: FOOTBALL OFFICIALS REGISTERED WITH THE MONTANA OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION**

**FROM: SCOTT WILSON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

**RE: FOOTBALL STUDY CLUBS**

This packet contains the six study clubs that will help you prepare for the 2023 football officiating season. Our hope is that these study clubs will be a challenging study tool that you will use for your best interest and that of the coaches and players of Montana.

Association regulations mandate that you attend six study clubs. The MOA expects you to complete each of the six lessons enclosed in a timely manner so that you will be on top of every change and all the rules completely. Please start the outlines before the season commences and note that this year's study clubs are emphasizing mechanics applications.

For those of you not located in the city where the pool is located, or those whose employment prevents the officials from attending study clubs please note the following regulation from the MOA Handbook:

"If an MOA member's employment prevents him/her from attending study clubs the official may receive credit for attendance if he/she complies as follows:

1. Makes prior arrangements with the regional director or head of pool.
2. Completes the study club outlines and presents them to the regional director or head of pool **in advance** of the meetings missed.
3. Exceptions may be made for certain military actions or other extenuating circumstances.
4. An official whose employment requires him/her to be away from home during the week may attend study clubs at an alternate pool location if he/she receives permission from the regional director(s) and the MOA Commissioner.

**PLEASE NOTE: Your regional director must sign your individual study clubs in order for you to receive credit. Football study club attendance must be in the hands of the Directors by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Please send your study clubs to your regional director, not to the MOA office.**

As requested by the regional directors, the mechanics examination is Study Club #1, while the NFHS Football Exam Part 2 has been moved to Study Club #3. We will continue to designate study club #2 to be the Football Mechanics training.

Best of luck to each and every one of you as you approach the season, and don't hesitate to contact us with any ideas about improving the scope and format of these study guides.

SW/ab

**MONTANA OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION  
FOOTBALL STUDY CLUBS  
LESSON #1  
2023-24**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

I. Concussion State Law - Officials' Responsibilities:

The MHSA/MOA requires each official to take the "NFHS Concussion In Sports – What You Need To Know" course each year. This is the second year that you will be required to watch this same clinic. That course must be taken after June 1st for the subsequent school year and must be completed before officiating scrimmages or contests. Also, officials are asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms and behaviors of a concussion and other possible serious injuries. If there is a player that exhibits signs and symptoms of an injury, officials will make coaches aware of the injured player and call an injury time out. The official should notify the coach by making the following statement:

"Coach, you need to take a look at this player; he/she is exhibiting signs and symptoms of an injury."

Once the official notifies the coach, it is now the coach's responsibility. The official does not need written permission for an athlete to return to play nor does the official need to verify the credentials of the appropriate health-care professional. The youth cannot return to play until they are evaluated by a licensed health care professional and receives written clearance to return to play from the licensed health care professional.

II. Review and discuss the 2023 MHSA / MOA Football Rules Clinic on [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org). This clinic must be completed individually by each member of the pool by August 24, 2023.

III. MOA Handbook Changes and reminders for 2023-24 are as follows:

**Changes for 2023:**

1. Mileage has increased from 62.5 cents per mile last year to 65.5 cents per mile this year. Per diem for each official, remains at 12 cents per mile. So, the driver, for a regular season match, would receive 77.5 cents per mile while the rider official would receive 12 cents per mile.
2. A fee increase for **regular season varsity and sub varsity** contests has been approved. Regular season varsity game fees will go from \$70 to \$75 in 23-24. Sub varsity fees will increase from \$48.00 to \$55.00 per contest in 23-24.
3. Post season fees will **increase \$5/game** 23-24.

**Reminders from Previous years:**

1. Football officials may wear either the one-inch striped shirt or the two-inch striped shirt, as long as the entire crew wears matching shirts, and the shirt must be tucked in.
2. Jackets
  - a. Football officials may wear a standard jacket for warm-ups only, solid black pullover, full zip or button up, unadorned (except for MOA service pins).
  - b. At the sub-varsity level only, football officials may wear striped jackets with an MOA patch.
3. Officials who coach ***are a member of the coaching staff*** are prohibited from working a varsity contest or tournament of his/her gender specific sport in the classification he/she coaches.

4. Study clubs can be conducted via real time video conferencing (which includes, but is not limited to: FaceTime, SKYPE, etc.) with the approval of the Regional Director.
5. Payment of Officials – the MOA Board and MHSA Executive Board approved the **following** in regard to the payment of officials and this payment change was instituted this past year (Previously, it was stated that an official must be paid before the contest unless another of the two payment options was agreed upon. Now, it isn't mandatory to pay before the contest however one of the three following methods must be utilized:
  - 1) All assigned officials may be paid within seven (7) business days of the contest with a check issued by the member school.
  - 2) All assigned officials may be paid with Ref Pay via Arbiter assignment software. A member school has (7) seven business days from the date of the contest to issue payment via Dragonfly.
  - 3) All assigned officials may be paid before the contest with a check issued by the member school. MOA officials are not allowed to accept checks written to other member officials. A member school has seven (7) business days from the date of the contest to reissue appropriate checks to the official(s) who actually worked the contest, if there has been an assigned official change.
6. Pink whistles may be used by officials at contests designated as breast cancer awareness events. Any other uniform modifications for the purpose of supporting a charitable fundraising event must be approved in advance by the MOA Commissioner.
7. MOA exams are now offered exclusively online. All are open book exams. The passing percentage for apprentice and certified remain at 60% and 80% respectively, and the passing percentage for master has increased from 70% to 85%. *Note: The deadline for requesting an upgrade has been reduced from twenty (20) days to seven (7) days prior to the opening of the exam.*

## **2023 FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES**

### **Clarified That Towels Do Not Have To Be The Same Solid Color For Each Player [1- 5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW)]**

Player towels may contain one manufacturer's logo and/or one school logo neither exceeding 2¼ square inches. Towels must be a solid color but now do not have to be the same solid color for each player. Towels may not be ball- or penalty-flag colored.

### **Clarified When a Player Is Inbounds After Being Out of Bounds [2-29-1]**

This change clarifies when a player is inbounds after being out of bounds. There is no change to any foul or subsequent penalty provisions, or any rules related to illegal participation or the provisions regarding eligibility to catch a pass.

### **Added A List of Criteria to Help Identify Players Who Should Be Defined as Defenseless Receivers [2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g]**

This change adds to the list of criteria to help identify players who should be defined as defenseless receivers related to application of unnecessary or excessive contact. This clarification should help game officials and coaches by defining allowable contact against defenseless receivers.

### **Intentional Grounding Exception Changed [7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5-2 d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5 (1)d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW)]**

This change permits the exception for intentional grounding to the first and only player to possess the ball after the snap ends. **This rule only applies to 11-player and 8-player football.**

### **Removed "Intentional" From Pass Interference in TABLE 7-5 [TABLE 7-5 2c (DELETED), 7-5 PENALTY]**

By removing "intentional" from pass interference, this change puts the rule in line with how it is already enforced which is a 15-yard penalty.

### **Changes In Basic Spot Penalty Enforcement [10-4, TABLE 10-4 (NEW), 10-6 (DELETED)]**

This change restructures and clarifies the amendments to Rule 10 to eliminate the excessive penalty enforcements for offensive fouls that occur behind the line of scrimmage. This revision stipulates the basic spot for enforcement of fouls behind the line of scrimmage is the previous spot rather than the spot

of the foul unless otherwise specified by rule. Current penalties for illegal kicking, batting and participation fouls, and provisions for offensive fouls occurring in the end zone that may result in a safety remain intact.

**Clarification On The Ball Being Handed Forward On A Running Play [Six-Player – Rule 7g (NEW)]**

The change allows the ball to be handed forward on a running play, including to the guards/ends, while prohibiting handing the ball to the snapper provided both players are behind the neutral zone.

**2023 EDITORIAL CHANGES**

1-1-7; 1-1-9; 1-3-2; 1-3-7 NOTE; TABLE 1-7; 1-8 (NEW); 3-6-1b(1); TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2; 9-5-1; 9-8-1; FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – II-5, X-3, X-5; RESOLVING TIED GAMES – 3-1; NINE-, EIGHT- AND SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES – RULES 2 and 7; PENALTY SUMMARY; INDEX.

**2023 POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

- 1. Helping the Runner**
- 2. Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials**
- 3. Game Management**

**HELPING THE RUNNER**

Rule changes have been made at higher levels of football allowing offensive teams to pile in behind and directly push the runner. Because of these changes, we are now seeing similar plays at the high school level. As guardians of the game, it is imperative that all stakeholders work together to remove “helping the runner” from our high school game.

Administrators, coaches and football game officials all have a responsibility to know, respect and teach/enforce the NFHS rules of high school football. Football is a vigorous, physical contact game and, for this reason, much attention is given to minimizing risk of injury to all players. Each respective rules code (NFL, NCAA and NFHS) has rules that coincide with the physical development of competing athletes and their goals for the game.

The NFHS Football Rules Committee’s main focus is risk minimization, followed closely by assurance of a balance between offensive and defensive rules. Because the players on defense must guard against the pass, they are not able to counter the advantages created by “helping the runner” formations. Allowing teams to help the runner by illegal techniques swings the balance heavily in favor of the offense.

Football game officials need to change their view of “helping the runner” to a risk issue (clipping, chop block) and remove it from the “pioneer call” category and refocus on ending plays when forward progress is stopped. Pushing the pile is legal; direct contact and pushing, pulling, lifting of the runner is not.

The NFHS Coaches Code of Ethics states: “Coaches shall master the contest rules and shall teach the rules to their team members. Coaches shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules. Coaches have a tremendous influence, for good or ill, on the education of the student, and thus shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.”

If school administrators/athletic directors truly believe that activities are an extension of the classroom, they must be actively involved with programs they supervise and redirect coaches when they observe them teaching prohibited tactics.

Removing “helping the runner” from high school football will at times be met with resistance. School administrative support of football game officials, re-focus of coaches and education of players will lead to a smooth transition. All those directly involved in our great game must stay committed to trying to minimize risk to all players and maintaining the balance between offensive and defensive play.

## **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COACHES AND GAME OFFICIALS**

Coaches and game officials must demonstrate respect for one another. This mutual appreciation is the foundation of appropriate and professional communication.

Football is an emotional game. Coaches and game officials must realize that competition often leads to intense interactions on the field. Both must work together and strive to manage verbal and nonverbal exchanges in ways that avoid escalating conflict.

Game officials must recognize their role in the game: to provide a service to the coaches and student-athletes in an unemotional and impartial manner. Game officials must always be respectful and maintain a calm demeanor in their comments to coaches, especially when tension is high. Game officials must avoid the urge to argue with coaches who disagree with their decisions. Coaches may ask questions, and game officials should make every effort to be approachable, actively listen, and provide correct and complete answers as soon as possible. Game officials should aim to be direct and concise in their communication of essential information.

When emotions are running especially high, game officials should de-escalate tensions and demonstrate empathy and understanding of the coach's perspective. Game officials must anticipate circumstances where coaches may become upset and pre-emptively diffuse the situation. A game official should never threaten the coach with consequences for their behavior, nor should a game official become defensive. If a coach exhibits inappropriate behavior and "crosses a line," the game official may choose to penalize the coach for unsportsmanlike conduct. However, throwing a flag should be a last resort. A better approach is to clearly and calmly tell the coach that the comments or behavior are unacceptable, and that it's difficult to focus on the on-field action if the coach continues to distract the game official.

Coaches model acceptable and unacceptable behavior for their student-athletes. If coaches disrespect game officials and make derogatory comments, players will behave in the same way. Coaches should win with grace and lose with dignity. Coaches must understand that the football field is an extension of the classroom and must exhibit proper conduct. This includes respecting the decisions of game officials even when they disagree, and handling differences of opinion in a civil and dignified manner. Dialogue with game officials should be constructive and respectful, not confrontational. Handling disagreements in a business-like manner teaches players good sportsmanship, which is a perennial focus of the NFHS.

Coaches and game officials have a professional responsibility to demonstrate respect for one another and communicate appropriately. Coaches and game officials love the game and desire to positively impact young people. Proper communication during competition teaches players a valuable life lesson about conflict resolution.

## **GAME MANAGEMENT**

Each school community must take pride in hosting an athletic contest or event. Proper advance planning is key to an orderly, secure, safe and enjoyable activity. Planning begins with clearly defined tasks for game administration and event personnel. Beginning with the arrival of players, game officials and spectators, each school must have a purposeful plan to address any and all expected issues, as well as the unforeseen.

Preparation begins with clear and concise communication between the host and the competing school regarding the logistics of arrival and departure. Meeting and greeting the visiting team is certainly the beginning of good sportsmanship. Clearly communicated information, such as parking information, location of ticket booths and entry gates, when given to the visitors is another step in assuring a great experience for all participants.

Game officials should be afforded the same communication considerations given the visiting school community. Host administration must provide accurate information for the officiating crew so as to ease any pre-game apprehension or uncertainty. Clear, concise communication is of utmost importance. Having assigned personnel to greet game officials and address all their pre-game and post-game needs is a bare minimum for the host school. Security of game officials must be an absolute priority. Make sure the locker room is properly supervised and access is limited to proper personnel only.

During the game, security of game personnel begins with ensuring that the sideline is properly secured and the playing field is restricted to essential game personnel. For safety and security reasons, essential game personnel would include game participants, reporters, photographers and game administration. All other, non-essential personnel should be located in the bleachers. All non-participants on the event level should be credentialed and restricted to being no closer than 2 yards from the sideline. Game officials are responsible for securing the team boxes and coaches' area. Sideline management begins with the consistent enforcement of game rules pertaining to the restricted area and the team box. The restricted area is designated to make the sidelines safe for all participants and to give game officials ample space to work. Game administration should be alert to requests of game officials in addressing problems beyond the team box and coaches' area.

The conduct of non-participants is the domain of game and school administration. Expectations for the behavior of spectators and other attendees should be clearly, and repeatedly, communicated to all attendees. The reading of a sportsmanship script before the game is one method of communicating expectations. Good sportsmanship must become part of the culture of any school community. Behavior not acceptable in the school's hallways should not be acceptable on the courts or playing fields.

Appropriate conduct of the public-address announcer is vital to the game atmosphere. The public-address announcer must be the first line of sportsmanship and must exemplify expected and acceptable conduct. The goal of the public-address announcer is to inform and not entertain. Giving play-by-play of game action and/ or critiquing game officials is unacceptable. The public-address announcer must be positive and respectful to all involved in the game.

#### **MINIMAL GAME ADMINISTRATION EXPECTATIONS**

- • Clearly communicated event itinerary
  - • Required field markings and game equipment
  - • Clock operator(s)
  - • Line-to-gain crew
  - • Game Official accommodations
  - • Visiting team accommodations
  - • Support personnel
  - • Medical personnel
  - • Security personnel
  - • Hospitality for game personnel and administration, inclusive of game officials
- IV. Review and discuss the articles listed in the Football Preseason Guide 2023 which was included in your football packet. (Please review the plays and rulings for each rule change area if they are provided).
- V. Answer and discuss all questions on the 2023 Officiating Mechanics Examination. We recommend that you complete it orally as a group. Please contact the office if you note any errors. The MOA expects all officials to "go by the book" – the NFHS Football Officials' Manual.

# 2023-2024 Football Mechanics 5-Game Official Exam

NOTE: In the exam situations, A—refers to the offensive Team and B—refers to their opponents the defensive team. K—refers to the kicking team and R—refers to the receiving team. A1, B1, K1 and R1 are players of these teams. If team possession changes during the down, each team retains its identity. In kicking situations, it is not during a try and no fair-catch signal has been given unless specified. Unless stated, acts occur while: the ball is inbounds; a forward pass is legal; any out-of-bounds is between the goal lines. Line means scrimmage line. Reference to a foul is to a player foul which is not unsportsmanlike. There is no foul or change of possession, unless it is mentioned, and penalties are considered accepted for enforcement. The questions in this examination are to be answered on the basis of a five-game official crew of game officials (Referee, Umpire, Head Linesman, Line Judge, Back Judge) as outlined in the current NFHS Football Game Officials Manual, unless a four-game official crew is specifically designated.

- 1 The game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the game officials had jurisdiction.  
True  
False
- 2 The line judge is the game official who will indicate the end of the fourth period.  
True  
False
- 3 The smooth conduct of the game is dependent upon how well the officiating crew on the field works with the clock operators and members of the line-to-gain crew.  
True  
False
- 4 Only the referee must consistently administer and enforce team-box and coaches' area restrictions.  
True  
False
- 5 The head linesman is the only game official who is to notify the opposing coach of a disqualification.  
True  
False
- 6 It is mandatory that any coach receiving two unsportsmanlike fouls carrying 15-yard penalties vacate the stadium area.  
True  
False
- 7 The game official - escorting the team with the second-half choice - obtains from that team's head coach its second-half choice and communicates same to the referee.  
True  
False
- 8 The back judge and umpire should bring an approved game ball from each team to the coin toss.  
True  
False
- 9 The back judge is to give a visible count of the last five seconds when on-field play clocks are not utilized.  
True  
False

- 10 When using a field microphone, the referee may not announce the number of the player who committed the foul.  
True  
False
- 11 The head linesman should take care of the game ball after approval by the referee.  
True  
False
- 12 Game officials should arrive at the site of the game at least 45 minutes before the scheduled game time.  
True  
False
- 13 The referee shall secure the name of the captain or team representative who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination.  
True  
False
- 14 Football game officials must have a football sense which supersedes the technical application of the rules so that the game goes smoothly.  
True  
False
- 15 The umpire shall furnish a clipping device for use in measuring first downs. Use of a second clip is recommended.  
True  
False
- 16 The game officials' appearance does not affect the attitude of coaches, players and fans.  
True  
False
- 17 Both arms crossed in front of the chest is the recommended crew communication signal for game officials to indicate 11 players in game when counting is complete.  
True  
False
- 18 The game official must draw distinction between contact necessary to make a legal block or tackle, and that which targets defenseless players.  
True  
False
- 19 The play clock operator should always run the 25-second play clock prior to an extra point try, prior to a kickoff and prior to the kick following a safety.  
True  
False
- 20 Use of any replay or television monitoring equipment in making any decision related to the game is prohibited, unless used in compliance with Rule 1-3-7 NOTE as authorized in a state association postseason contest.  
True  
False
- 21 While thorough knowledge of the rules is important, it is not enough to guarantee the competency of the game official.  
True  
False
- 22 Game officials cannot set the tone for the contest by putting a stop to derogatory comments between players.  
True  
False



- 23 Preventive officiating facilitates the smooth conduct of a game within the rules.  
True  
False
- 24 If there is a dispute regarding the number of the down, the umpire shall determine the official down number after consultation with the other game officials.  
True  
False
- 25 The game official's uniform should fit properly and be clean and neat.  
True  
False
- 26 The umpire, on a kickoff, on a kick to his/her side, signals game clock to start when the kick is touched, only if the ball is even or upfield from the umpire.  
True  
False
- 27 The referee, on a kickoff, before the kick, should monitor bench area.  
True  
False
- 28 After the kick on the kickoff, the back judge is to observe legality of blocks and action away from ball.  
True  
False
- 29 The head linesman should move cautiously with play along the sideline on a kick to the opposite side of field on a kickoff.  
True  
False
- 30 The line judge, on a kickoff, should watch for any infractions involving K's free-kick line.  
True  
False
- 31 After a kick on a kickoff, the line judge should be in position to take over coverage of runner in his/her area on long return.  
True  
False
- 32 The back judge, on a kickoff, should count R players.  
True  
False
- 33 Before the kick on the kickoff, if the ball falls or blows off the tee, the referee should sound whistle to prevent action.  
True  
False
- 34 All game officials should leave the field together between halves.  
True  
False
- 35 Between halves, all game officials should discuss the overtime procedure, if applicable.  
True  
False
- 36 If play is in progress and time expires for the period, the horn should be sounded.  
True  
False

- 37 On a scrimmage kick out of bounds in flight, the referee lines up the covering official at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline by using an outstretched arm.  
True  
False
- 38 The umpire will attempt to keep players a significant distance away from the seriously injured player(s) during an injury time-out.  
True  
False
- 39 When the visible game clock is not used, the line judge will notify the referee approximately four minutes before the end of the second and fourth periods.  
True  
False
- 40 All game officials, during a time-out, should confirm number of remaining time-outs.  
True  
False
- 41 The back judge, during a time-out, should time 60-second interval and notify referee at 45 seconds and again when 60-second interval expires.  
True  
False
- 42 The head linesman, during a time-out, should check number of time-outs remaining for each team.  
True  
False
- 43 When measuring for a first down, the back judge will take the forward indicator from crew members at place of measurement.  
True  
False
- 44 When measuring for a first down, the referee will spot the ball at the proper place when measurement is completed.  
True  
False
- 45 In administering penalties, the umpire will make note of enforcement spot for penalty.  
True  
False
- 46 The line judge should be ready to have line-to-gain equipment moved after penalty administration.  
True  
False
- 47 All game officials should hustle up sidelines to free-kick position and then fill out game cards after a safety, try or field goal.  
True  
False
- 48 In an unbalanced formation, the strength of the formation is determined by the number of eligible receivers outside of the offensive tackles.  
True  
False
- 49 The head linesman and umpire should be ready to adjust coverage if potential passer decides to run.  
True  
False

- 50 The line-to-gain indicator shall be set to establish a 10-yard neutral zone before a field-goal attempt by free kick, after fair catch or awarded fair catch.
- True  
False

**OUTLINE MUST BE SIGNED BY ALL PRESENT AND SENT TO YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
BY DECEMBER 1, 2023**

**MONTANA OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION  
FOOTBALL STUDY CLUBS  
LESSON #2  
2023-24**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

The MOA Regional Directors have discontinued the required mechanics clinics (train the trainer) that have been held at the MCA convention in Great Falls. The reason for the discontinuation is that the intensive training shared with pool leaders and representatives over the past several years has now become repetitive except for the few new mechanics changes every other year.

A different mechanics training requirement (hopefully an online offering) is being explored for future years.

The MOA will still designate study club #2 to be centered on mechanics training for football. The MOA Office still has all of the resources from the Train the Trainer" clinics during previous summers held in conjunction with the Montana Coaches Association (MCA) Clinic in Great Falls. We expect pools to use these resources to continue their training and if pools need information or material from these clinics for these study clubs, please contact the MHSA office.

**The Game Officials Manual Committee added and/or updated the following items for 2022-2023:**

- 1. Guides for "When in Doubt"**

**2023 is a NON-print year for the NFHS Football Game Officials Manual.**

**2022-2023 Game Officials Manual Points of Emphasis (See pages 104-107 of the 2022-2023 NFHS Football Game Officials Manual):**

- 1. Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials**
- 2. Officiating Intentional Grounding**
- 3. Time-Sensitive Situations – End of Second and Fourth Periods**
- 4. Free-Kick Mechanics**

**2023-2024 NFHS FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL POINTS OF EMPHASIS - Review and Discuss:**

**COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COACHES AND GAME OFFICIALS**

Football is an emotional game, due not only to the amount of physical contact between players but also to the competitive spirit ingrained in most players and coaches. Game officials and coaches must recognize the passion and intensity inherent in the game and manage their interactions in a way that avoids stoking the fire of emotional response to game situations. Game officials must recognize their role in the game: to provide a service to the coaches and players in an unemotional and impartial manner. Game officials must always be respectful and maintain a calm demeanor in their comments to coaches, especially when tension is high. Game officials must avoid the urge to respond in kind to coaches who are vocal in their disagreement of the judgment of game officials. The game official's job is to de-escalate the tension and explain the decision in a concise and matter-of-fact manner. This is difficult to do, especially when a coach is screaming at a game official. In those cases, the game official must actively listen to what the coach is saying and then respond factually and unemotionally. Game officials must anticipate game situations where coaches will be upset and pre-emptively diffuse the situation. This requires strong communications skills and empathy and understanding of the coach's perspective. A game official should never threaten the coach with consequences for their behavior, nor should a game official become defensive. If a coach crosses the line, then the game official's option is to flag the coach for unsportsmanlike conduct. However, throwing a flag should be a last resort. A better approach is to clearly and calmly tell the coach that the comments or behavior are unacceptable, and that it's difficult to focus

on the action on the field if the coach is repeatedly distracting the game official. Coaches must understand that their behavior has a profound impact on their players. Players tend to behave the way their coaches behave. If coaches show little respect for game officials and make derogatory comments, players will likely treat game officials similarly. Coaches should win gracefully and lose with dignity. Coaches must also understand that the football field is an extension of the classroom and must set a strong example for their players to follow. This includes respecting the decisions of game officials even when they disagree, and handling disagreements in a civil and dignified manner. This doesn't mean that coaches must accept everything that occurs during the game without emotion. Rather, it means that if there is a disagreement, any discussion with game officials regarding that disagreement should be constructive and respectful, not confrontational. Handling any disagreement in a business-like manner teaches players good sportsmanship, which is a perennial focus of the NFHS. By communicating respectfully, both game officials and coaches will leave with a positive experience. Neither game officials nor coaches do their jobs for the money; rather, they do it because of their love of the game. Through coaches' and game officials' behavior toward each other, players will learn a valuable life lesson regarding how to handle conflict.

### **OFFICIATING INTENTIONAL GROUNDING**

A new, second exception to the intentional grounding rule was added for the 2022 season and was revised and updated for the 2023 season. Intentional grounding is a foul when a forward pass is thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver, or, when a forward pass is intentionally thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or to conserve time. These acts are fouls in NFHS play with two exceptions:

- **NFHS Rule 7-5-2 EXCEPTION 1.** – It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.

- **NFHS Rule 7-5-2 EXCEPTION 2.** – It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass if all of the following conditions are met:

- a) The passer has possessed the ball beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap;
- b) The pass reaches the neutral zone including the extension beyond the sideline; and
- c) The passer is the only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.

The free-blocking zone, as determined at the snap, is 4 yards on each side of the football (3 yards in 6-, 8-, and 9-player) The referee can use the following guidelines to judge whether the passer has been beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone:

- If a passer moves at least three full steps laterally they have likely left the free-blocking zone.
- In normal splits, the inside foot of the tight end is in the free-blocking zone.
- The distance between a hash mark and the nearest goal post upright is 5 yards.
- The goal post uprights are almost 4 yards from the center of the field.
- By keeping these distances in mind, if the ball is spotted on a hash mark, on a goal post upright, or in the center of the field, then these become very convenient points of reference to assist in determining whether the passer was beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone. Remember, if the passer has not met all three requirements in EXCEPTION 2, it remains a foul if there was no eligible offensive receiver in the area, or, if an eligible offensive receiver in the area cannot make a bona-fide attempt to catch the forward pass (e.g., the forward pass is intentionally thrown to the ground short of an eligible offensive receiver, or the forward pass is intentionally thrown over an eligible offensive receiver's head). Many game officials choose to ignore this foul if there is an eligible offensive receiver in the general area of the forward pass. However, if the referee judges the forward pass was intentionally thrown incomplete, it is a foul. This is a foul that requires good crew communication and could be called after the game officials have gathered and discussed the play, or could result in the referee rescinding a flag that was dropped at the time the pass was thrown should a game official have additional information to provide to the referee that could alter the ruling. Knowledgeable game officials recognize that some passes are incomplete or do not arrive in the immediate vicinity of the eligible offensive receiver because of the lack of skill on the part of the passer, a broken pattern on the part of the intended eligible offensive receiver, or because the passer's accuracy was affected by the action of the defense. These game officials can also recognize an intentional and purposeful act and they can consistently and judiciously administer the

rules so that the team whose passer purposely incompletes a pass is penalized as required. When a foul does occur, the penalty flag needs to be thrown by the referee. The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

#### GUIDES FOR "WHEN IN QUESTION"

- Passer in or outside of free-blocking zone.....outside
- Forward pass crossed the neutral zone or the neutral zone extended.....has crossed

#### TIME-SENSITIVE SITUATIONS – END OF SECOND AND FOURTH PERIODS

Why is this important? One minute at the beginning of the game and one minute at the end of the game are both 60 seconds. Factors impacting the time remaining in a game include: score, field position, available time-outs, injury and penalty timing, and an early season game against a state championship. When one or a number of these situations occur, the game can become time-sensitive and the number of seconds in a minute carry great importance. Not only will the game be on the line, but everyone will be watching the clock.

NFHS football rules have been put in place to protect the integrity of the game timing. These rules are designed to prevent a team from either using an excessive amount of time or unfairly conserving time. The key to working time-sensitive situations is to understand the environment, and communicate that understanding to the game officials, coaches and players. Working in a time-sensitive environment requires a heightened sense of awareness. When there are natural breaks in the game, game officials should remind each other when these conditions may exist. Game officials should discuss special clock rules relating to game time, fouls and injuries. Coaches should be reminded of the number of remaining time-outs, and that the game officials will be looking to them for their use. Game officials should also keep both teams informed of when the game clock will be starting (on the ready-for-play or on the snap). Game officials must know when to hustle to get the ball spotted, and referees should maintain a consistent tempo when winding the clock after an awarded first down, usually six to eight seconds into the playclock. If time may expire during live play, the off-game official (first to complete dead ball officiating) should check the game clock to determine if time remains in the half. If there is a penalty or other clock stopping event, game officials need to know whether the half is over, there is time remaining on the game clock or whether there will be an untimed down.

So, why is all of this important? Being prepared for time-sensitive situations can be the difference between a good night's sleep and multiple restless nights.

#### FREE-KICK MECHANICS

Except for the kickoffs starting each half, all others follow success or failure of teams on the previous series and are an opportunity to improve their position for subsequent play. During a kickoff, all 22 players are briefly moving the same direction (no kickoff shall start with more or less than 22 players), then heading toward each other at full speed eventually merging at a point of attack. Contact must be observed over the entire field while officials themselves are moving – a challenging task whether four-, five- or seven-crew members are present. Successful coverage of kickoffs rests on a thorough pregame discussion. Depending on the number of crew members used, specific assignments of free-kick lines, the legality of the kick, downfield areas or numbered kicking team members must be acknowledged. For the traditional deep kick, coverage of the goal line and pylons, downfield movement, return in or away from the game official's position, clock starting and likely areas of illegal contact must be covered. Teams may prefer a shorter kick (referred to as a "pooch" kick) or they may execute a squib kick. Both types of kicks limit return options. A fair catch is a possible outcome of a pooch kick. Understanding of which game official has responsibility for the catch versus contact around the receiver must be discussed. The squib kick is quickly grounded and maintains the status of a kick and the officiating challenges of a loose ball. Illegal contact, first touching and ultimate possession require precise crew actions. The onside kick is a unique challenge. Responsibility for the kick legality, free kick lines, first touching by Team K, contact – both who initiated and if legal – must be discussed because contact will occur quickly. Possession will be aggressively fought for. Quick and decisive movement, determination of possession and restraining of extra participants are needed.

Fouls on free kicks range from the dead ball (encroachment and illegal kicking formation), live-ball fouls where it is critical to determine if the foul occurred during the kick or after change of possession to correctly enforce and the most common – the free kick out of bounds untouched by Team R. Careful

explanations of options to the offended sideline requires precise crew communication in offering possible enforcement scenarios.

With a thorough pregame discussion of free kick mechanics, rules and different kick scenarios, the crew will be better equipped to handle unusual circumstances that may arise.

**OUTLINE MUST BE SIGNED BY ALL PRESENT AND SENT TO YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
BY DECEMBER 1, 2023**

MONTANA OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION  
FOOTBALL STUDY CLUBS  
LESSON #3  
2023-24

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

I. Recommendations for Study Club #3

- A. That the NFHS Football Examination Part II be taken by the pool at home or in a manner appropriate to the pool. If taken at home we suggest answers be discussed orally as a group at the next meeting.
- II. Discuss any problems, clarifications, concerns, or ideas that occurred while administering the major rule changes from last year.
- III. Review and discuss all of the following new NFHS rule changes for last year:

**2022 FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES**

**Ball May Be Changed Between Downs [1-3-3]**

Any game official may order the ball changed between downs.

**The Number "0" Is Now Legal [1-4-3, Figure 1-4-2, 1-5-1c(1), 7-2-5b EXCEPTIONS, 7-5-6a]**

The single digit number "0" is now a legal number.

**A Chop Block Has Been Redefined [2-3-8]**

A chop block has been redefined as an illegal combination block where contact is made above and below the waist.

**Clarified The Offended Team's Game Clock Options [3-4-7]**

Clarified the offended team's game clock options following a foul committed with less than two minutes remaining in either half.

**Added A New Exception To The Play Clock Administration [3-6-1a(1)e EXCEPTION 2. (NEW)]**

Added a new exception to the play clock administration following a foul committed only by the defensive team.

**Added A New Exception For The Passer [7-5-2 EXCEPTION 2. (NEW), TABLE 7-5-2, TABLE 7-5]**

Added a new exception that allows the passer to legally throw the ball away to conserve yardage.

**2022 EDITORIAL CHANGES**

1-5-1f; TABLE 1-7; 2-28-2; 3-5-9; 3-5-11; 5-2-4; 6-2-6; 7-5 PENALTY; TABLE 9-3-6 (Deleted); 10-2-2; 10-2-3; FOOTBALL PENALTY ENFORCEMENT – FIGURES; FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – V-3, VII-2; RESOLVING TIED GAMES – 5-1-1, 8-3; SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES – RULE 2 and 7; PENALTY SUMMARY

**2022 POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

- 1. Targeting / Defenseless Player



- 2. Legal Uniforms and Equipment
- 3. Sportsmanship

- VI. Review and discuss the articles listed in the Football Preseason Guide 2023 which was included in your football packet. (Please review the plays and rulings for each rule change area if they are provided).
- VII. Answer and discuss all questions on the 2023 Officiating Mechanics Examination. We recommend that you complete it orally as a group. Please contact the office if you note any errors. The MOA expects all officials to “go by the book” – the NFHS Football Officials’ Manual.
- IV. Answer and discuss all questions on the 2023 NFHS Football Exam Part II. We recommend that you complete it orally as a group.



## 2023 NFHS Football Exam - Part II

NOTE: In the exam situations, A—refers to the offensive team and B—refers to their opponents the defensive team. K—refers to the kicking team and R—refers to the receiving team. A1, B1, K1 and R1 are players of these teams. If team possession changes during the down, each team retains its identity. In kicking situations, it is not during a try and no fair-catch signal has been given unless specified. Unless stated, acts occur while: the ball is inbounds; a forward pass is legal; any out-of-bounds play occurs between the goal lines. Line means scrimmage line. Reference to a foul is to a player foul which is not unsportsmanlike. If there is no foul or change of possession, unless it is mentioned, and penalties are considered accepted for enforcement.

- 1. It is forward-pass interference if contact by B is obviously away from the direction of the pass.
  - A. True
  - B. False
- 2. If the game is interrupted due to weather during the last three minutes of the second period, and the delay is at least three minutes, the opposing coaches can mutually agree to shorten halftime intermission, provided there is at least a one-minute intermission (not including the three-minute warm-up period).
  - A. True
  - B. False
- 3. Towels must be a solid color but do not have to be the same solid color for each player. Towels may not be ball-penalty-flag colored.
  - A. True
  - B. False
- 4. A player remains out of bounds until returning to the field and no body part touching out of bounds.
  - A. True
  - B. False
- 5. When a player on defense uses a hand or arm, the hand may not be in advance of the elbow at the time of the contact or at the shoulder or below unless the opponent squats, ducks or submarines.

- A. True
  - B. False
6. The basic spot is the previous spot unless Rule 8-5-2 applies for a foul by A or B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.
- A. True
  - B. False
7. A football jersey does not need to completely cover the shoulder pads and all pads worn above the waist on the torso.
- A. True
  - B. False
8. Football gloves, not made of unaltered plain cloth, are not required to meet either the SFIA specification or the existing NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.
- A. True
  - B. False
9. A multiple foul is one or more live-ball fouls (other than non-player or unsportsmanlike).
- A. True
  - B. False
10. The spot of a player foul is where the foul occurs.
- A. True
  - B. False
11. If a substitute enters the huddle and the replaced player does not leave the field immediately, it is a dead-ball, illegal participation foul.
- A. True
  - B. False
12. It is an unsportsmanlike foul if any player attempts to focus attention upon himself with any delayed, excessive or prolonged act.
- A. True
  - B. False
13. Catching is always preceded by touching the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance.
- A. True
  - B. False

- 14 . A handed ball beyond the neutral zone is considered to be a pass.  
A. True  
B. False
- 15 . A dead ball may become live only by a legal snap or free kick.  
A. True  
B. False
- 16 . An offensive player is on his line of scrimmage when he complies with the position requirements of a lineman.  
A. True  
B. False
- 17 . One of the requirements for being on the offensive line is that the lineman's head or foot must break an imaginary drawn parallel to the line of scrimmage through the waist of the snapper when the ball is snapped.  
A. True  
B. False
- 18 . At the snap, at least eight A players shall be on their line of scrimmage.  
A. True  
B. False
- 19 . It is illegal participation if a player is lying on the ground to deceive the opponent at or immediately before the snap or free kick.  
A. True  
B. False
- 20 . A player who is attempting to pass is a runner until the player gives up possession of the ball by losing control of the ball.  
A. True  
B. False
- 21 . If an illegal forward pass strikes the ground, the ball remains live.  
A. True  
B. False
- 22 . If runner A1, who is beyond the neutral zone, tosses the ball forward, he has thrown an illegal forward pass.  
A. True  
B. False

- 23 . When the team commits a live-ball foul followed by one or more dead-ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.  
A. True  
B. False
- 24 . During a down if B1 holds and then B2 commits an unsportsmanlike act, only one foul can be penalized.  
A. True  
B. False
- 25 . A legal scrimmage kick can only be made from behind the neutral zone before team possession has changed.  
A. True  
B. False
- 26 . A charged time-out occurs when the ball is dead and is the request of either a player or the head coach (or head coach's designee).  
A. True  
B. False
- 27 . The clock shall not start on first touching by K.  
A. True  
B. False
- 28 . When a team attempts to conserve or consume time illegally, the referee shall order the game or play clock started or stopped.  
A. True  
B. False
- 29 . Protests of NFHS rules are not recognized.  
A. True  
B. False
- 30 . If runner A1 touches B1 while B1 is out of bounds, A1 is also out of bounds.  
A. True  
B. False
- 31 . A new force can be added to a kick in flight.  
A. True  
B. False

- 32 . A roughing the passer foul by B gives A an automatic first down.  
A. True  
B. False
- 33 . The penalty for an illegal forward pass from beyond the neutral zone is 10 yards and loss of down.  
A. True  
B. False
- 34 . No player shall intentionally go out of bounds during the down and influence the play.  
A. True  
B. False
- 35 . A pop-up kick is legal.  
A. True  
B. False
- 36 . When weather conditions are construed to be hazardous to life or limb of the participants, the crew of game officials is authorized to cancel the game.  
A. True  
B. False
- 37 . Yard lines shall be marked with a continuous line every 5 yards beginning and ending 6 inches from each sideline.  
A. True  
B. False
- 38 . A player shall not chop block or clip.  
A. True  
B. False
- 39 . Before the ready-for-play, A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the hash marks following an awarded fair catch.  
A. True  
B. False
- 40 . When the game clock is stopped due to Rule 3-5-7i and Team B is the only team to foul, the play clock will be set at 30 seconds.  
A. True  
B. False

- 41 . The number "0" is a legal number.  
A. True  
B. False
- 42 . When a foul is committed with less than two minutes remaining in either half, the offended team will have the option to start the game clock on the snap.  
A. True  
B. False
- 43 . Only the umpire may order the ball changed between downs.  
A. True  
B. False
- 44 . A chop block is a combination block by two or more teammates against an opponent other than the runner, with one block without delay, where one of the blocks is below the waist and one of the blocks is above the waist.  
A. True  
B. False
- 45 . It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass if, the passer has not stepped beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap, and the pass reaches the neutral zone, including the extension beyond the sideline.  
A. True  
B. False
- 46 . It is permissible for state associations to approve an extension of the team box and to determine the individuals who may be in the extended area, provided such extension is the same for both teams.  
A. True  
B. False
- 47 . There is no limit to the number of coaches who may take part in an authorized team conference between the 9-yard marks.  
A. True  
B. False
- 48 . Face tackling is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent at the shoulders or below with the face mask (top portion) of his helmet.  
A. True  
B. False

- 49 . The game officials shall assume authority for the game, including penalizing unsportsmanlike acts, 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time - an earlier time if required by the state association - or as soon thereafter as they are able to be present.
- A. True
  - B. False
- 50 . It is a touchdown for A when a live ball in A1's possession breaks the vertical plane of B's goal line.
- A. True
  - B. False

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**BY DECEMBER 1, 2023.**

**MONTANA OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION  
FOOTBALL STUDY CLUBS  
LESSON #4  
2023-24**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_























CLUB \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

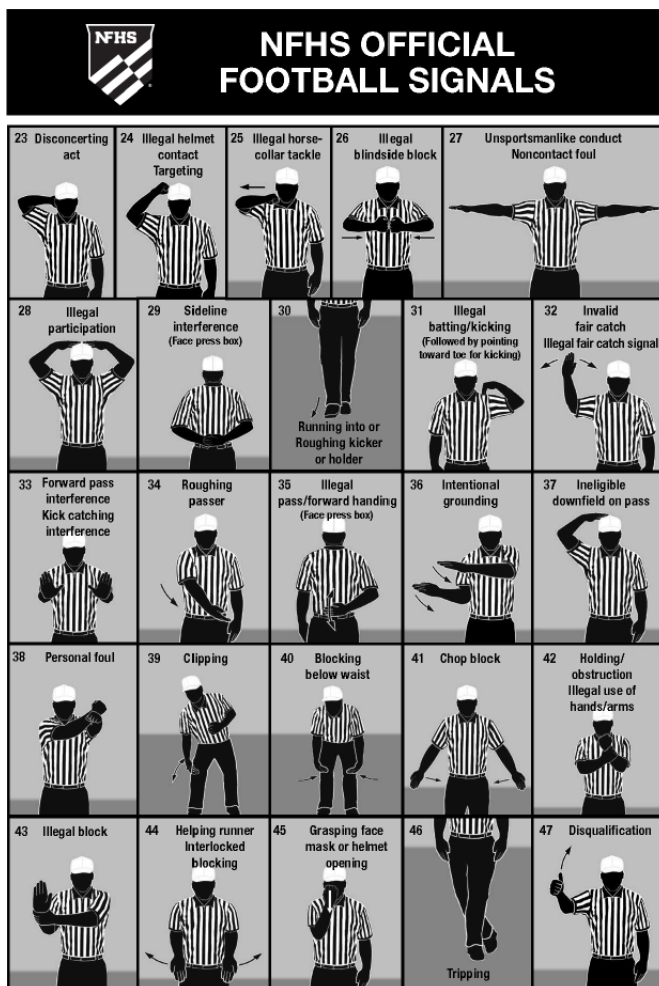
- I. Preseason Guide 2023 – Please review these great articles:
  - a. Spot On – Page 1
  - b. Definition of Inbounds Player modified – Page 2
  - c. Addition to Grounding Exception Rule – Page 2
  - d. Flashback: 2022 Rule Changes – Page 3
  - e. 2023 NFHS Football Points of Emphasis – Page 4
  - f. Penalties that Include a First Down– Page 6
  - g. Returned to Sender – Page 7
  - h. Kicking Play with a Twist – Page 8
  - i. When to Throw the Flag Determined by Foul Intervals – Page 10
  - j. Fine Lines: How the Boundaries Affect the Game – Page 12
  - k. Forward Thinking on Backward Passes – Page 13
  - l. Beware! Shenanigans May Precede or Prevent a Legal Snap – Page- 16
- II. Review and discuss the NFHS Signal Chart:





## NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS

1 Ball ready for play *Untimed down 	2 Start clock 	3 Time-out Discretionary or injury time-out (followed by tapping hands on chest) 		
4 TV/radio time-out 	5 Touchdown, Field goal, Point(s) after touchdown 	6 Safety 	7 Dead ball foul, Touchback (move side to side) 	
8 First down 	9 Loss of down 	10 Incomplete forward pass Penalty declined No play, no score Toss option deferred 	11 Legal touching of forward pass or scrimmage kick 	12 Inadvertent whistle 
13 Disregard flag 	14 End of period 	15 Sideline warning 	16 First touching Illegal touching 	17 Reset play clock to 25 seconds (Use both hands to have play clock reset to 40 seconds) 
18 Encroachment 	19 False start Illegal formation Free kick infraction 	20 Illegal shift (2 hands) Illegal motion (1 hand) 	21 Delay of game 	22 Substitution infraction 



III. Discuss the following topics about coaches which were in a recent publication in regard to “DEALING WITH HEAD COACHES”:

### **Dealing with Head Coaches**

1. Make eye contact. A coach wants to be assured that he has your attention. Don't act distracted.
2. Never call coaches by their first names. They'll feel most comfortable, particularly in front of their players, simply by being called “coach.” If you know their last name, it is all right to say mister.
3. Show respect to get respect. That means using formal language, keeping communication brief, adopting a neutral tone and avoiding any personal remarks. Stick to the issue at hand in a straight forward way.
4. Ask them to deal with problem players. Be sure to identify the problem in explicit terms, without making the player to be an evil person. Sometimes that is hard to do, but can be accomplished with a careful choice of language.
5. Remain calm under all circumstances. If a coach moves toward you to “get in your face”, pivot sideways so that you are shoulder-to-shoulder. It is hard for someone to speak in an aggressive, confrontational way when the proximity between parties is side-by-side.
6. Let coaches have their say. When a coach approaches to protest or argue, adopt an instant “listening mode” and let the aggrieved individual finish his remarks. Do not interrupt.
7. Use non-confrontational body language. To be aware of body posture, facial expression, head tilt and arm position, one must say, “I am going to appear receptive and contemplative. I can think best and measure my words that way. I am determined to not escalate the problem.”

8. If you make a mistake, admit it. A simple apology is sufficient; do not elaborate or rationalize (i.e., make excuses).
9. When coaches raise their voice, lower yours. A soft voice has a way of triggering a reciprocal soft reply.
10. Get both coaches together. Sometimes there is a need to reach a uniform agreement in a joint consultation. Weather problems in an outdoor situation are examples. Other issues could include clock problems or difficulties with game equipment.
11. Support fellow officials. Never betray partners by showing that you doubt their judgment. Instead indicate faith in someone else's decision by saying the partner had a better view of a more favorable angle than the responding official or protester.
12. Acknowledge the coach: "I hear what you're saying." "I understand" or "I see what you mean" are equally effective. If the next sensible step is to confer with a partner over a controversy, make that next move firmly.
13. Give praises when proper; promote sportsmanship. When a coach makes a gesture of consideration for the opponents or toward the officials, be sure to acknowledge it. Sometimes a smile and a nod of the head are enough.
14. Determine from where the coach is coming. Put yourself in their shoes just as you would in trying to understand a player's viewpoint. That means having some insight about a coach's motivation and overall goal. Sometimes how the coach will be viewed in the eyes of players and team supporters is the primary stimulus for behavior.
15. Keep your ego under control. Often a mere glance will carry a significant message, whether it's negative or positive, whether it is meant to curtail dialogue or to encourage it. A quizzical expression can signal a desire for additional input, whereas a frown may denote closure.
16. Give the coach the benefit of the doubt, but be sure there is doubt. If you are uncertain about the accuracy of a ruling, make a decision and tell the coach what you believe is correct. Avoid being too adamant about a rule interpretation. Someone has defined the word positive as "being wrong at the top of your voice."
17. Permit the coach to disengage. Recognize (through facial expression, body language, and terminating vocal patterns) when it is time to cease a dialogue. Nothing is gained by insisting on the last word.
18. Don't use your hands when talking to a coach. Your gestures will reveal more than you'll want to convey.

Remember that a coach's job depends on many factors and doing your best is one of them. He prepares hard for many hours, so you should work hard in being consistent and fair. Help the coach to be a better coach by allowing him to coach and not be overly concerned with officiating. Listen to him, answer his questions honestly, and provide him the respect that he deserves, within the spirit and intent of the rules, and you will reduce his anxieties about the one aspect of the game that he cannot control and should not be focused on—officiating. Refereeing a game is not brain surgery but managing people in a highly emotional environment takes constant awareness and skills. The most successful officials have these skills. Practice the above skills and take the time use them every game when an opportunity arises. You'll be surprised at the results.

IV - Review the following quiz from Referee Magazine - Copyright © 2021 by Referee Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

1. B1 hits runner A2 after A2 is out of bounds. A2 reacts by roughly knocking down B1. B3 then shoves A2 to the ground.
  - a. The penalties are enforced in the order of occurrence.
  - b. The penalties for the fouls by B1 and A2 offset, but the penalty for B3's foul is enforced.
  - c. All of the fouls offset.

2. Fourth and 12 at team K's 18-yard line. K1 punts and R2 gives a valid fair catch signal at team K's 40 yard line. R2 does not touch the ball, which strikes the ground at team K's 44 yard line. At team K's 46 yard line, R2 blocks K3 in the back above the waist. R4 recovers the ball at team K's 48-yard line. The penalty for R2's foul is enforced from:
  - a. The previous spot.
  - b. Team K's 46 yard line.
  - c. Team K's 48 yard line.
3. The penalty for R2's foul in question 2 is:
  - a. Five yards.
  - b. Ten yards.
  - c. Fifteen yards.
4. Team A has the ball, second and nine at its own 21-yard line. A1 advances to team A's 28 yard line and fumbles. The ball bounces high into the air. B2 leaps, grabs the ball while he is airborne and returns to the ground touching the sideline at team A's 30 yard line. As a result:
  - a. It's first and 10 for team B at team A's 30 yard line.
  - b. It's first and 10 for team A from its 30 yard line.
  - c. It's third and two for team A at its 28 yard line.
5. Third and seven at team A's 23 yard line. A1's forward pass is intended for eligible A2 at team A's 35 yard line. B3 is flagged for defensive pass interference. Despite the interference, A2 makes the catch and carries the ball across team B's goal line.
  - a. Touchdown. The penalty is declined by rule.
  - b. First and 10 for team A at its own 38 yard line.
  - c. The touchdown counts; team A may choose to have the penalty enforced on either the try or the kickoff.
6. Second and seven at team B's 32 yard line. Eligible receiver A1 is airborne near the sideline when he receives and has firm control of a legal forward pass at team B's 18 yard line. B2 pushes A1 so that he first touches out of bounds. At no time does A1 lose control of the ball.
  - a. Complete pass.
  - b. Incomplete pass.
  - c. Pass interference on B2.
7. Fourth and 10 at team R's 25 yard line. Team K's field goal attempt is blocked. The ball does not cross the neutral zone. K1 recovers the ball at team R's 30 yard line, advances and is downed at team R's 12 yard line. The next down will be:
  - a. First and 10 for team K from team R's 12 yard line.
  - b. First and 10 for team R from its own 12 yard line.
  - c. First and 10 for team R from its own 25 yard line.

8. First and 10 at team A's 30 yard line. A1 catches a legal forward pass and advances to team B's 35 yard line, where he is downed. While the pass was in flight, linebacker B2 grasped and twisted the facemask of guard A3.
  - a. The penalty is enforced from the end of the run. That yields first and 10 for team A at team B's 20 yard line.
  - b. Because the penalty would be enforced from the previous spot, team A will likely decline the penalty. That yields first and 10 for team A from team B's 35 yard line.
9. Second and 20 at team A's 20 yard line. A1 drops back to pass. B2 holds eligible receiver A3 at team A's 35 yard line. With no receiver open, A1 is downed at his own 10 yard line. The next play will be:
  - a. First and 10 for team A from its own 30 yard line.
  - b. Second and 10 for team A from its own 30 yard line.
  - c. Second and 20 for team A from its own 20 yard line.
10. Fourth and five at team B's 30 yard line. A1 fumbles at team B's 20 yard line. The ball rolls to team B's 16 yard line, where B2 bats the ball. The ball rolls out of bounds at team B's six yard line.
  - a. Illegal batting. Team A will decline the penalty and take the ball, first and goal at team B's six yard line.
  - b. Illegal batting. It will be team A's ball, first and goal at team B's 15 yard line.
  - c. Illegal batting. It will be team A's ball, first and goal at team B's 10 yard line.
  - d. Illegal batting. It will be team A's ball, first and goal at team B's eight yard line.

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BY DECEMBER 1, 2023**

**MONTANA OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION**  
**FOOTBALL STUDY CLUBS**  
**LESSON #5**  
**2023-24**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations for Study Club #5

Discussion Items:

1. Discuss the new NFHS Rule regarding shortening of Halftimes. Discuss your protocol in regard to making decisions regarding all weather situations (Lightning, Smoke, etc.)
2. Discuss the NFHS Point of Emphasis – Ineligible downfield and the line of scrimmage. Discuss the expanded neutral zone and responsibilities within your crew on proper coverage and teaching points.
3. Discuss the process of disqualifying or ejecting a coach. Who must be notified of this ejection within 48 hours?
4. Discuss the guidelines for “when in question” principles would be applied.
5. Review how one should carry the whistle as well as the process for sounding the whistle. What 2-3 situations would necessitate a different sounding of the whistle? Discuss the process when an inadvertent whistle occurs.
6. Review the following quiz from Referee Magazine - Copyright © 2021 by Referee Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.
  1. Fourth and 10 from team K's three yard line. The snap bounces back to punter K1, who recovers the ball on one hop. K1 starts to run, comes to a sudden stop and gets off a punt. R2 doesn't touch the ball and contacts K1 kicking leg while it is still in the air. The contact causes K1 to go to the ground.
    - a. No foul because it wasn't reasonably certain K1 would kick.
    - b. No foul because the bad snap removes the possibility of a foul against the kicker.
    - c. Roughing the kicker, a 15-yard penalty.
    - d. Running into the kicker, a five-yard penalty.
  2. On a try from team R's three yard line, the officials don't notice until after the play team R had 12 players participating. The kick fails. After the ball is dead, K2 commits a personal foul.
    - a. The penalties cancel. Play resumes with team K's free kick.
    - b. The penalties cancel. The try is replayed from team R's three yard line.
    - c. Both penalties are enforced. The try is replayed from team R's 16-1/2 yard line.
    - d. Both penalties are enforced. The try is replayed from team R's nine yard line.

3. Team A's ball, third and goal at team B's three yard line. A1 fumbles at team B's two yard line and the ball rolls into the end zone. B2 recovers the ball in the end zone and tries to advance, but is tackled with the nose of the football in the field of play and the back of the ball still in the end zone. During B2's run, B3 clipped A4 at team B's six yard line.
  - a. Safety; team A scores two points.
  - b. After enforcement it will be team B's ball, first and 10 from its own 10 yard line.
  - c. After enforcement it will be team B's ball, first and 10 from its own three yard line.
4. Fourth and 12 at team K's 15 yard line. During a punt, K1 is flagged for holding at team K's 22 yard line. R2 catches the kick at team K's 40 yard line and advances to team K's 10 yard line, where he fumbles. The ball rolls out of bounds at team K's two yard line. The penalty will be enforced from:
  - a. The previous spot.
  - b. The spot where the kick ended.
  - c. The spot where R2 fumbled.
  - d. The dead-ball spot.
5. Team K snaps the ball at team R's three yard line on a try. Holder K1 muffs the snap and, as the ball rolls on the ground, K1 bats it forward at team R's six yard line. K2 recovers at team R's four yard line and carries the ball across the goalline.
  - a. Legal play; team K scores two points.
  - b. Legal only if K1 was off his knee when he batted the ball.
  - c. K1's bat is illegal. The try will be replayed after enforcement.
6. Fourth and 12 at team K's 20 yard line. Punter K1 shanks the kick. K2 catches the kick behind the neutral zone and advances to team K's 40 yard line.
  - a. Legal play; team K's ball, first and 10 at its 40 yard line.
  - b. The ball should have been declared dead when K2 caught it. It's team R's ball at the spot of K2's recovery.
7. First and 10 at team A's 40 yard line. A1 sweeps right end and is driven out of bounds at team A's 49 yard line. During the run, A2 is flagged for holding at team A's 37 yard line. After the penalty is enforced:
  - a. It will be first and 23 at team A's 27 yard line.
  - b. It will be first and 20 at team A's 30 yard line.
8. Third and five at team B's 20 yard line. B1 intercepts a forward pass at his own three yard line and his momentum carries him into his end zone. While still in the end zone, he fumbles. The ball rolls forward until it goes out of bounds at team B's five yard line.
  - a. Touchback. Team B's ball at its own 20 yard line.
  - b. Team B's ball at its own three yard line.
  - c. Team B's ball at its own five yard line.
9. Fourth and 10 at team K's 20 yard line. K1's punt is in flight and R2 is in position to catch the kick at team K's 45 yard line. K3 is close to R2 but does not make contact. R2 must step around K3 to make the catch. R2 is downed at team K's 43 yard line.
  - a. No problem.
  - b. Kick-catching interference only if R2 gave a valid fair catch signal.
  - c. Kick-catching interference whether or not R2 gave a valid fair catch signal.
10. On second down late in the game, A1 muffs the hand-to-hand snap, which rolls up his arm. A1 gains control of the ball, then throws it to the ground forward.
  - a. No problem.
  - b. Illegal forward pass.

## **Read and discuss the following article**

### **I. Discuss and review the following information from Referee magazine on strategies for preparing yourself mentally to officiate:**

Just as strenuous as being physically fit to officiate are the mental requirements of the game. Rules knowledge is vitally important, but knowledge alone is not good enough. Application of the rules is crucial. Knowing what to do when a situation arises in a game and doing it in a timely manner are the marks of a good official. Approach the mental side in the same way you do the physical: Conditioning! Rules knowledge is the foundation – you need instantaneous recall on the field. Here are ways to mentally condition:

- Basic studying
- Self Tests
- Engage in conversation with others about the rules and about football itself – much can be obtained and retained in an informal setting with friends, co-workers and associates
- Communicate with everyone involved in the game – from your supervisor, to your partners, to the coaches and players
- Listen well to others – absorb and react to those things that are important; dismiss those that aren't
- LISTEN – ASSESS – REACT – RESOLVE
- When reacting – be strong but not overbearing
- Speak to be heard and respected – practice that before you get to the game – make your tone and your volume level work for you
- Create a personalized demeanor on the field – establish a respectful and approachable persona – your mannerisms will speak for you
- Cultivate a high level of mental tenacity – the norm in officiating is to be faced with unpredictable and unusual problems – if you face each and every problem as a welcome challenge, you can be mentally prepared to handle them effectively
- Learn from each and every situation
- Create a mental library from which you can draw when needed
- Do less criticizing and more recognizing
- Have a pregame conference with yourself – including getting the proper rest to be mentally sharp, leaving all outside diversions and problems at the door and focusing totally on football.

**OUTLINE MUST BE SIGNED BY ALL PRESENT AND SENT TO YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
BY DECEMBER 1, 2023**



**MONTANA OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION  
FOOTBALL STUDY CLUBS  
LESSON #6  
2023-24**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

A. Review your group's season.

- I. Are there any specific problems in your area schools that should be addressed? i.e. field concerns, locker rooms, security, game times, poor sportsmanship, crowd control, etc.
- II. Are there any football rules or mechanics changes your group would like to see? Evaluate the new rule changes for this past year. The rules or mechanics changes must be in writing to the MOA/MHSA office by November 1, 2023.
- III. What issues does your group believe are important universal issues that need to be addressed by all officials' pools throughout the state? **Please send those items to Scott Wilson at the MHSA office so they may possibly be included for rules clinics and study clubs.**
- IV. Does your group have any suggestions in addressing the issues in III?
- V. Discuss potential MOA "Hall of Fame" candidates in your area. Application forms are available from your regional director, the MOA/MHSA office or downloadable at <https://www.mhsa.org/page/show/5834243-hall-of-fame>. They must be routed through your regional director and to the MOA office before April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- VI. Discuss methods of evaluating fellow MOA members. Are the methods working properly and positively? Should you start a new method if you're not evaluating at the present time? Do these methods work for "upgrading"? Are they fair to all of your levels? Are you allowing anybody to upgrade? Are you methods for not allowing an upgrade fair?
- VII. For everyone's benefit, review dues deadlines and upgrading procedures and requirements. Be aware of the importance of notifying the MOA office of address changes. Know the "dues due" date.
- VIII. How many prospective officials did you have in your pool this year? Discuss and evaluate your methods of recruitment.
- IX. You have an obligation to read the MOA Handbook. All officials should be aware of the governing body's rules and regulations. Any changes you'd like to see should be directed to your regional director for the council's meeting in December.
- X. Take time to discuss your pool's assignment practices. Is your method fair to all involved? What areas may need some improvement or change in relation to assignment of officials?
- XI. Take time to evaluate your individual performance as an official this year. Incorporate your own personal reflections and observations from crew members and fellow officials.

- XII. Discuss some items concerning what an official can do in the off-season to prepare for next year. Include in the discussion off-season exercise programs, reviewing video of games done, attending a camp (if possible), National Federation Officials' Education etc.
- XIII. Are there any items, issues or clarifications that possibly would benefit all officials by being included in our officials' publication, **The Official Word**?
- XIV. Discuss and evaluate your pool's methods of retaining officials.

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