Questions on Rules

Question: With regard to 6 man mechanics on field goal coverage that has broken down. When a field goal try is attempted outside the 30 yard line and inside the 15 yard line what are the coverages for the SJ, FJ and L, and LJ positions?

Answer: Have the Field Judge hold on the end line and the Side Judge come through the end zone to the goal line. Tell the SJ's to not get involved in the play. If it is a shorter FG attempt, the SJ may not be able to get to the GL, if not just move along the end line and try to get a good angle on the play (pass play). There are holes in 6 man, this in one of them. There probably won't be coverage on the GL pylon if it is a longer field goal attempt because the short wings can't get there and the SJ is just coming straight through the end zone. Officials must attempt to get best angles and make a call if there is a play at the GL pylons.

Question: Some visiting teams will warm-up at their home field and come to the game site very late and come onto the field directly from the bus at 3 minutes before game time. What happens if this occurs and how do the officials handle the pre-game meeting and coin toss?

Answer: The team must be present at the 45 minute mark before kick-off for the officials to inspect player equipment, game balls etc., and the official coin toss is to be held 30 minutes prior to kickoff, as per our PIAA pre-game mechanic. If the team does not abide by this mechanic, the head coach should be penalized 15 yards unsportsmanlike conduct.

Question: Is it now a penalty to forcefully hit the passer just as he is releasing the ball or just after he released the ball because he is a defenseless player?

Answer: The new defenseless player rule is not any change from prior years. The list was just expanded to make officials and players aware of who may be a defenseless player. As far as the QB, or any other defenseless player, any illegal hit or an unnecessary forceful hit, in the official's judgement, could be a foul for unnecessary roughness. When in doubt, a foul should be called. That being said, a defenseless player can still be contacted legally as long as the contact can't be avoided by the defender and is not unnecessarily forceful.

Question: Is there a minimum number of players a school needs to have a football program?

Answer: Rule 1-1-3, Each team must begin the game with 11 players, but if it has no substitutes to replace injured or disqualified players, it may continue with fewer. Believe it or not, to be legal a team only needs 7 players on offense and they must all be on the line of scrimmage. Under rule 7-2-4 and 5, there does not have to be a player in position to receive a legal snap. The snap just has to leave the snappers hand and hit the ground to be legal. So if a team wants to play with 7 players on offense, they will have to snap the ball to nobody. There is not a minimum number of players required on defense.
**Just a few questions on the new rule allowing offended team to start clock on snap, on an accepted penalty:**

**Question:** How about a double-foul, resulting in a replay of the down. Do the teams get a choice to start on the snap?

**Answer:** No because these fouls would cancel and there is no accepted penalty, so NO choice

**Question:** How about multiple dead ball fouls, on both teams. Any choices: 1 dead ball foul by each team (resulting in cancellation)

**Answer:** No because these fouls would cancel and there is no accepted penalty, so NO choice. (assuming you're asking about equal 15 yard fouls)

**Question:** 2 dead ball fouls by one team, one dead ball foul by the other

**Answer:** Yes because there will be one accepted foul, so the offended team would get a choice to start on the snap. (Again, assuming we are referring to 15 yard fouls)

**Question:** Live ball accepted foul by one team, followed by a dead ball foul by the other team. Do the teams get a choice to start on the snap?

**Answer:** Yes, it would be the offended team's choice on the live ball foul first, then if they choose not to start the clock on the snap, then it would be the offended team's choice on the dead ball foul.

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**Situations**

1:00 minute remaining in the half, game clock running. Team A false starts, (dead ball foul) then team B late hits Team A. Team B would get the choice first, if they choose not to start on the snap, then Team A would get the choice. If Team B chooses to start on the snap, then there is no further choice.

1:00 minute remaining in the half, game clock running. Team A runs and is tackled in bounds. During the run, Team A holds and then after the play Team B late hits. First Team B will have the choice to start on the snap because of the accepted holding foul, if they choose not to start on the snap, then Team A will have the choice on the late hit.

Keep in mind, any accepted foul allows the offended team a choice to start on the snap, if the game clock would normally be started on the ready. In an offsetting foul situation, there are no accepted penalties, so no choice.

Live ball unsportsmanlike conduct fouls are treated as dead ball fouls. If there are UNS fouls during a touchdown scoring play, the TD counts. If there are live ball personal fouls during a touchdown scoring play, the TD may not count. UNS fouls are non-contact fouls, whereas personal fouls are contact fouls. It is very important to administer the correct type of fouls, especially on a scoring play.

If there is an illegal pop-up kick judged, the play should be shut down immediately, this is a dead ball foul. We must be aware of late hits after we shut the play down.


If the field has operable and visible 25 second play clocks, the official responsible does not raise his/her arm with 5 seconds remaining, officials should only raise an arm when there are no operable and visible play clocks. Officials do not "basketball" count the last 5 seconds, just keep you hand steady overhead. If one of the clocks is inoperable, shut them both off and take the time on the field.

The Sportsmanship code must be read verbatim by the Referee to the head coach and captains for every game at every level.
Notes to remember:

There has not been any change with respect to the pre-game coaches meeting. The Referee and Umpire will still conduct this meeting. The new rule change allows any member of the crew to accompany the Referee only in the event the Umpire cannot. There is no change to our mechanics.

The official crew is not going to be responsible for any band playing issues during the game. If a member of a team complains about bands playing during the game, tell them we are not responsible and to seek out game management for assistance.

Illegal Blindside blocks with forceful contact must be flagged anywhere on the field, the proximity to the runner has no bearing whether the block is illegal or not. If a defensive player is in pursuit and is close to the runner, that player still may not be illegally contacted by a blindside block. Remember an illegal blindside block must be made with forceful contact, if the block is just a "screen" type block or in your judgement is not forceful, then it is not an illegal block.

The new clock timing rule allows the offended team on any accepted penalty to have the option to start the game clock only on the snap. The offended team never has the option to start the clock on the RFP. Any accepted foul is included, not only false starts, encroachments, etc., it includes any accepted foul.

If we are in a Mercy Rule timing situation, the offended team does not have the choice to start the clock on the snap. The normal Mercy timing rules will supersede in this situation

An illegal pop-up kick is an immediate dead ball and the foul is free-kick infraction. It is a 5 yard penalty and re-kick. Signals are (7-19) dead ball and rolling fists

If there is a blindside hit, with forceful contact, made on any player outside the FBZ, not initiated with open hands, it is a foul for an illegal blindside block. The block must be made with "forceful contact" to be illegal. If this hit is initiated with open hands or judged by the official not to be forceful, then there would be no foul. If the blocker just hits the opponent and does so without forceful contact, there is not a foul. No more de-cleaters or blowup hits etc. and proximity to the runner has any bearing on this hit (block).