RECENT INTERPRETATIONS

- **PLAY CLOCK:** If there is an officials timeout taken to send a player out of the game for one play and the 25 second play clock is interrupted, then the play clock must be re-set to 25 seconds and restarted. Anytime the play clock is interrupted, it must always be reset to 25 seconds. We can never start the play clock with less than 25 seconds. This may be an advantage for Team A, but sending a key player off the field for a play may be more of a penalty than the 5 yards. However this is the rule so we must stop the clock and send them off the field. Again, if it is judged the team is doing something illegally to gain an advantage, the Referee has the option to penalize as an Unsportsmanlike conduct foul. Keep telling your officials to be diligent is checking equipment, a lot of problems can be avoided if illegal/missing equipment is discovered before the player participates.

- **UNINTENTIONAL CONTACT:** The unintentional contact foul (which is a personal foul, not an UNS foul) under Rule 9-4-8 cannot be combined with the sideline interference "progression" fouls under 9-8-1k and 3, it is clear in the PENALTY section on page 75. The third foul under 9-8-1-k and 3 is an UNS charged to the head coach, the fourth foul is another UNS charged to the head coach which results in an automatic DQ of the head coach as stated in the same PENALTY. A second UNS foul with a 15 yard penalty results in disqualification. The fouls under these 2 separate rules cannot be combined for an automatic DQ. Any 1 FLAGRANT foul at any time can result in a DQ. Further, If there is an unintentional contact foul against Team A in the first period; that is charged to the head coach, then any subsequent unintentional contact foul for the remainder of the game charged to Team A would now be an automatic DQ of the head coach. However, neither of these fouls count towards the UNS "progression" fouls under 9-4-8, I hope this is clear. This is also why it is very important that these types of fouls are documented on your game card with detailed specifics, and the head coach needs to be informed after each foul and explained to him. Casebook play 9-881d is the exact play and explains this situation very clearly. Also read casebook 9-8-3a and 9-4-8c.

- **MECHANICS CHANGES:** If there is only one penalty marker thrown on an obvious foul (i.e. false start, encroachment, DPI, etc), the calling official may give a preliminary signal to the Referee to aid in penalty administration. If there is more than 1 flag on the play, there must be a conversation between the calling officials to determine if the fouls are the same, different etc, it should then be reported to the Referee.

- **CLARIFICATION:** in 6 man - the FJ has the game clock and the SJ has all other timing (i.e. timeouts, halftime, time between periods and scores, etc.). Referees do not stop the halftime mandatory 3:00 warm-up period early, let the entire 3:00 minutes elapse, even if both teams are ready to play. This can be a liability issue. Review mechanics manuals which are located on the PIAA Football site.
RECENT INTERPRETATIONS CONTINUED

- **ADIDAS ADIZERO 5-STAR 7.0:** Adidas was notified by the NFHS, that this particular football shoe as designed, is not compliant with current 2018 NFHS Football Rules and thus will not be permitted to be used for those games that are using NFHS Football Rules for play. Please be sure to share this information with your respective member schools, coaches and game officials.

- **NEW KICKING RULES:** The new kicking rules changes under 6-1-9b, 10-4-2 Exception, 10-5-1j, will not be applicable in overtime periods. The spirit and intent of this rule change was to reduce kickoffs in regulation play, there would be an unfair advantage gained if this change is applied in OT.

- **STARTING THE CLOCK:** Casebook play 3.4.7.C reaffirms the interpretation we used from last year. If both teams foul, whether it be a live ball or dead ball foul, each offended team has the option to start the clock on the snap.

- **CREW HEADSETS:** Crew communication headsets are not approved by the PIAA to be used for football games at this time.

- **UNDERSHIRTS:** Casebook play 3.5.10 l (d), undershirts that extend below the waist will have to be tucked in the pants or cutoff, treat it just like the Jersey. There is a growing trend in the NFL and NCAA where players are wearing the jersey shorter and have a long undershirt protruding from underneath the jersey. This of course has started to appear in NFHS games. Get this cleaned up early, before the cool weather starts.

- **PENALTY ON A KICK:**
  - **SITUATION:** With the new rule that allows the receiving team to accept the distance for a penalty on a kick during the down prior to the change of possession from the succeeding spot, as long as the receiving team in the next team to put the ball in play.
  - **PLAY:** Receiving team fumbles on kicking teams 20 yard line. Kicking team picks up the ball and starts running and he fumbles on his own 30. The receiving team recovers on the kicking teams 32 and is tackled there. Would this allow the receiving team to accept the penalty and have it enforced from the kicking teams 32 yard line?
  - **RULING:** If the foul by the kicking team was prior to the change of possession and the kicking team is not the next to put the ball in play, then the receiving team can choose to take the penalty from the succeeding spot (kicking teams 32 yard line).

- **FIRST DOWN:** If a first down is gained by Team A and then there is a dead ball personal foul on Team A after the play, the penalty will be marked off 15 yards from the dead ball spot and it will be 1st and 10. The only way it can be 1st and 25 is if the dead ball foul occurred AFTER the ready for play, which is going to be very rare.

- **SPOTTING THE BALL:** Head Linesmen and Line Judges must be on the same yard line when spotting the ball. It is very evident if you are not even with each other, even 1/2 yard. When the spot is very close to the yard to gain, the wings should crash in hard and demand the ball from the Umpire then spot it. The Umpire should not spot the ball, give it to the wing who is asking for the ball.

- **UMPIRE REMINDER:** There are 7 times Team A/K can choose to move the spot to anywhere between the hash marks. (4-3-6) after a try, kickoff, safety, fair catch, awarded fair catch, touchback and for the start of OT. The team shall have the same option if the down is to be replayed or a dead-ball foul occurs.

- **WATCHING THE PLAY:** Do not look up at the ball on kicks and passes. The ball will come down. Watch the players for illegal contact.

- **BACKUP PLAN:** Referees, have a backup plan: Crews should discuss rotation of officials in pre-game in the event a crew member gets hurt.
### RECENT INTERPRETATIONS CONTINUED

- **OFFICIALS TIMEOUT:** When an officials timeout is taken for an injured player or helmet coming off or required equipment is missing or improperly worn, the player shall be replaced for at least one down, unless halftime or an overtime intermission occurs. So, if a play is run and there is an accepted foul which requires a replay of the down, the player must still remain out of the game until the next down.

- **CHAIN CREW:** Referees after a first down on long play, there is no need to wait for all of the chain crew to be in position. We do not want to hold up the game waiting for a slow chain crew. When the box is set, wind the clock. HL and U should make a mental note from where the ball was snapped. Also, Referees when starting the play clock and the game clock, do not give the play clock "chop" signal then wind the game clock, just give the winding signal, that starts both clocks simultaneously.

- **HOLDING FOULS:** On holding fouls, only call the foul if it restricts the opponent and has an impact on the play. A slight tug on the shirt or a marginal hold away from the point of attack is not a quality foul and should be passed on and the player talked to. Make it be there and have an impact on the play. If the runner is tackled for a loss or no gain, the hold probably did not have any affect on the play.

- **LOS WING POSITIONS:** LOS wings, square off your spots, do not come in for the spot at an angle. Moving down the sideline to the forward progress spot, then stopping and squaring off is a much more accurate spot than coming in at an angle. Also, it keeps you off the field so you won't get in the way of any players. Make sure you are aligned with your partner across the field. We cannot be off even 1/2 yard from each other, it is very apparent on film.

- **DEEP WING POSITIONS:**
  - Deep wings in 6 and 7 man games, you must come up field and cleanup out of bounds plays. When players go into the bench area your primary responsibility is to go in after them and separate and walk them back to the field. Help you short wings on this. Officiate the entire play from off the field, do not come onto the field too early, stay wide. When the goal line is your responsibility, be aware of where the pylon is, do not back pedal past the pylon and then try to make a call at the goal line. Stay at the pylon, just back out into dead ball area on the goal line if the play is coming to the corner.
  - Count and signal the defense on every play. Especially be aware if the offense goes hurry up and the defense is trying to substitute. We must be aware of these situations.

- **CATCHES/INTERCEPTIONS:** On catches/interceptions if the receiver is going to the ground while in the process of making a catch and his first contact is with the ground, he must maintain control of the ball after hitting the ground. An immediate drop of the ball should be ruled incomplete. We do not want to give any cheap turnovers. When in doubt, wipe it out.

- **GAME FOOTBALL:** Under NFHS rules, each team is allowed to use their own approved NFHS footballs during the game. Unless there is a conference/league rule related to game balls, each team can use their own approved footballs. They should be checked and marked for legality during pre-game.

- **MARCHING BANDS:** The officials’ 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. Teams are NOT to be penalized for bands playing.

- **LIGHTNING/SEVERE WEATHER:** Review with your officials the Guidelines on handling contests during lightening or thunder disturbances on Page 104 of the 2018 Rule book. There is an addition in the guidelines from past years. At night, under certain conditions, lightening flashes may be seen from distant storms. In this case it may be safe to continue play. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightening detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty. Please do your part to protect out student athletes, coaches and spectators, as well as your safety. Always error on the side of safety.
RECENT INTERPRETATIONS CONTINUED

- **INTERRUPTION OF CONTESTS:** Review Rule 3-1-4, games interrupted because of events beyond the control of the responsible administrative authority (i.e. lightening delay, lights go out) shall be continued from the point of interruption, unless the teams agree to terminate the game with the existing score. Officials should always discuss the alternatives with the schools representatives of both teams before making final decision as to continue the game or suspend. The officials crew must record all game information (period, time, down, distance, score etc.). The game will be started at the exact spot of the suspended contest.

- **TOUCHDOWN AND FOUL:** If there is a touchdown scored by Team A but there is a live ball personal foul for an illegal contact hit by Team A behind the play, the touchdown does not score and the penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul. If the foul is on Team B, then score the TD and Team A would have the choice of having the foul enforced on the try or the subsequent kickoff.

- **ILLEGAL CONTACT AND BLINDSIDE HITS:** We have been doing a good job officiating the illegal contact fouls and blindside hits, both calling the foul where necessary and not calling a foul on legal hits. Keep up the good work and remember to educate players and coaches when possible. Remember there is no place for these illegal hits in the high school game.

- **PLAY REVIEW:**
  - **PLAY 1:** Runner A20 is grabbed by the back of the collar by B50 on the B-2 yard line, as A20 crosses the goal line for a TD, B50 pulls him down backwards by the collar.
    - **RULING:** A horse collar foul should be called. A will have the option of taking the 15 yard penalty either on the succeeding kick-off or half the distance to the goal for the try.
  - **PLAY 2:** A’s ball for a try from the B-3 yard line. As A1 rolls out he is tackled by the facemask by B75 on the B-12 yard line.
    - **RULING:** 15 yard personal foul facemask foul by B75, it will be enforced 1/2 the distance to the goal from the spot of the foul, and A will re-try from the B-6 yard line.
  - **PLAY 3:** 4th and 10 from the A-20 yard line, Team A punts. R20 gives a valid fair catch signal, but muffs the kick at the B-40 yard line. During the loose ball, the BJ sounds his whistle before K15 recovers the ball at the B-45 yard line.
    - **RULING:** Inadvertent whistle. The down will be replayed, A 4th and 10 from the A-20, clock on Ready For Play. Reminder for the covering down field official to not have a quick whistle on these punt plays, make sure the ball is caught before sounding your whistle.
  - **PLAY 4:** 3rd and 10 from the B-45. A89 catches a pass at the B-38 and runs to the B-5 where he is downed in bounds. During A89’s run, A50 blocked B10 in the back on the B-30.
    - **RULING:** Illegal block in back, the 10 yard penalty will be administered from the spot of the foul making it 3rd and 5 from the B-40, clock on Ready for Play. The basic spot is not the previous spot, the foul occurred during the running play.
  - **PLAY 5:** K punts from the K-40. The ball is rolling at the R-5 yard line, during the kick, K50 blocks in the back at the R-35 yard line. R10 picks up the rolling ball and advances to the K-5 yard line where he is tackled inbounds. During R10’s run, R45 is called for an illegal blindside block at the R-30 yard line.
    - **RULING:** R has the option of keeping the ball by declining K50’s block in the back foul, R did not foul prior to gaining possession (clean hands principle). Team K would then accept the illegal blindside block foul by R-45 and it will be administered 15 yards from the spot of the foul (this is now a running play). Team R will have 1/10 from the R-15. If both teams accept each foul, then the fouls would offset and the down would be replayed.