

## Topeka Officials Association

### Football Newsletter - Week 4

**It Always Amazes Me** that the football season moves along so quickly. After this Friday, we are nearly half way through the season. What have you personally done to improve your officiating? What has your crew done to improve?

One of the first things that comes to mind is: Have you read the Rules Book to the extent that you are comfortable with 99% of the situations you and your crew will face on the field? Are you comfortable with the **Mechanics** your crew uses? Are you uncomfortable with the way your crew has handled some situations thus far? Is your crew comfortable with the way in which you have **communicated** with coaches?

If you are really comfortable with all of the above, you're not trying very hard!! Our goal is not to just show up every week - our goal should be to get better every week. What are you doing to be a better official? How are you helping your crew get better. You owe it to the game - the kids - your crew to be a better official every time out.

**Weather:** As I sit here in my office at home this morning, it is pouring down rain - lightning and thunder - and, it is very dark outside at nearly 11:00 a.m.

Remember that we have new guidelines for inclement weather. When an official (or, administrator) even **hears** thunder, we are to have a **minimum** of a 30 minute delay. This new edict needs to be adhered to religiously. I can hear the naysayers now: "When I played in high school, we never stopped a game for thunder - or, lightning." Obviously, the Federation believes in the safety of all the participants. This new edict takes the uncertainty out of the situation. We may not like the mandatory delay, but, as officials, the safety of the participants must be our #1 concern!

**More Early Season Stuff: Chain Crew:** Every chain crew in the nation will let you know right away that they are the most experienced crew in the State, blah, blah, blah. Make sure that H has a thorough pre-game with the chain crew - let them know what is expected of them and, perhaps most importantly, for their safety and yours, keep them off the sidelines. Our H, Terry Keefer, is polite (most of the time), but insistent. Having them where they are supposed to be helps to keep the players and coaches where they need to be.

**New Two-Yard Sideline Belt:** Keep players and coaches out of that area during live ball situations. That is basically what the rule says. I think it is an excellent rule - a cluttered sideline is not a safe sideline. Identify "Get Back" coaches before the game and then encourage them to do their jobs.

**Another New Rule - the Horse Collar:** Discuss with your crew all the ingredients necessary for a Horse Collar infraction at the Federation level. If you have something that looks suspicious, talk about it before enforcing!