

TOA Football Newsletter

Week 4

Time Flies: It is incredibly hard for me to believe that we are already in Week 4 of the high school football season - the regular season is nearly half over and we're still in the non-conference part of the collegiate season. As opposed to many other sports the football season is only two months long. Even though there is a Holiday Break in basketball, the regular season spans three months and has twice as many playing dates as football. The point is this: We must take every game very seriously - we must do our best every time out and realize that we have relatively few opportunities to work varsity football games - proper preparation and proper attitude will take us a long way towards giving the kids - coaches - and the game our best efforts.

Kickoff Mechanics: In watching some high school games on TV, it is clear that some of us are "cloudy" as to our duties on a 5-person crew. I know that all of our crews at least go through the motions - but, make sure we have 11 players for each team on the field - there should never be a penalty for too many players - nor should we have too few players. Be sure and confirm with a partner that each team has 11 participants on kickoffs!

In 2004, the kickoff mechanics were changed - one of the changes put the Umpire on the 20 yard line - press box side. The umpire has a key role in kickoff coverage - he is primarily responsible for the first wave of blockers. One of the problems I often see is that U is standing stationary at the 20 yard line - while the initial blocking is taking place at the 15 or so on a longer kick and maybe the 25 or 30 on a shorter kick. It is imperative that U move to where the initial wave of blocking is taking place! What sense does it make to stay stationary on the 20 yard line when the blocking action is taking place somewhere else?

Also, U has the returner (if the returner is on the press box side) all the way to the the one yard line. At BVNW a couple of seasons ago, that mechanic temporarily slipped my mind. Understanding that speed has never been one of my better attributes, I did the best I could - not to keep up with the runner, but to keep him in sight!! At least my compatriots did not laugh at me - until the game was over!

Safety: Providing a fair and **safe** environment for the kids is probably our most important goal. Do not let kids get by with late hits - do not let players illegally use their helmets - be aware of and have a plan for hot weather - dangerous storms - discuss dangerous weather procedures with school administrators before the game - always, Always, ALWAYS **Error On the Side of Safety!**

Quick Quiz: Do the following infractions carry a "loss of down" penalty in addition to the yardage penalty? 1) Ineligible receiver down field; 2) Offensive holding; 3) Illegal forward pass; 4) Intentional grounding; 5) Illegally handing the ball forward; 6) Offensive pass interference?

Do the following infractions result in an **Automatic First Down**? 1) Defensive holding; 2) Tripping by the defense; 3) Grasping an opponents face mask; 4) Roughing the passer; 5) Roughing the kicker; 6) Roughing the holder; 7) Roughing the passer; 8) Slapping the helmet of the blocker; 9) Disconcerting signals yelled by the defense?

Loss of Down: 3, 4, 5, and 6 are correct. Automatic First Down: 4, 5, 6, & 7 are correct.

Jim Burr: As soon as you lose your focus, that's when something happens that calls for such concentration. The ability to put other matters aside is often what separates the elite officials from the rest!