

TOA Football Newsletter

Week 5

Jim Burr: I already have received some flak about quoting a basketball official for the football newsletter - but, here is the quote again: "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!"

Not only is the above pertinent for football officials, it is crucial for all officials. I think perhaps one of the most difficult tasks in officiating is being focused on 1) what happened; 2) what should the consequences be; and, 3) what is the proper application of the rules. Someone on your crew needs to be the guy who always asks the right question - at the right time - that will provide the right results. I was probably the worst at seeing what happened but letting senior officials make enforcement mistakes while being a meek onlooker. In officiating, every official needs to let their partners know what they saw AND what should be done to conform with the rules. Got a rules expert on your crew? All five of you should be rules experts!

But, being an expert concerning rules does not mean a darn thing if no one on the crew saw a critical element of the play - how many of us have stood by while a discussion was taking place and you all of a sudden realize that you saw something different from what is being discussed? If we are truthful, the answer is **all of us!!** Don't jump to conclusions, get the call correct - get the administration correct - have the good common sense to listen to even the most junior member of the crew. Rules knowledge and proper administration is something **all** members of the crew need to excel in. It is never too late to brush up on the rules - it is never too late to speak up concerning a play - it is never too late to revisit penalty administration, and it is never too late to listen to your partners. Often times, it is the least expected member that can "save a situation!" And, a crew!! At your position, know where to look - know what to look for - know what you saw - report the situation - know the rules and know the enforcement. Then, make sure that it is enforced correctly - learn how to concentrate at your position! If all five officials can do this, you will have an excellent crew and one that will make your Friday nights enjoyable!

Blocking Snapper on Kicks: Pay special attention to action against the snapper on scrimmage kicks. The snapper cannot be contacted directly following the snap - U's judgment is critical here. The NCAA says one second is the guideline and that is probably a good way to look at it. Our emphasis here needs to be on acts committed by the defense and this rule is intended to give the snapper an opportunity to lift his head and get into a position where he can defend himself. Also it is reasonable to allow a defender not on the LOS opposite the center to be allowed to rush and make contact with the center after he has had a reasonable opportunity to raise his head and defend himself. Be sure that U is using the phrase "Don't Hit the Center" as a verbal reminder prior to the snap. Although one second is a pretty good time frame, if the center has not regained his balance and is still vulnerable, do not allow unnecessary contact. Error on the side of safety!!

Sideline control: Continue to work with coaches to help keep the sidelines clear. This is another area we have started the season off in a good way, and want to continue that trend. We are not concerned as much when the ball is dead, but we expect coaches to keep the 2-yard area clear while the ball is alive. Officials can often anticipate when a possible problem is about to develop, so use proper communication. Also, when a coach wants to talk to any official and he is out on the

field, try to walk him back to the sideline and have the discussion there. **Do not carry on any conversation with a coach on the field.** One technique is to tell the coach that you will talk to him and answer any questions, but walk him to the sideline and talk as you go. In that way, you are both allowing him to speak, and showing him respect by listening, but at the same time getting both of you off the field. Communicate appropriately. If he wants to hang himself, he will have to do so on the sideline and **not** out on the field where he can better “make a scene!” And, of course, if he is on the sideline, he will not be as inclined to “put on a show” since he is not “out on stage!”

Equipment-Safety: Thanks to Ken Rivera, Supervisor of officials - Mountain West Conference - Make sure players are properly equipped. One area of concern, however, is the risk that players are exposing themselves to by not covering their knees with the required pads...we are seeing this at all positions, but mainly with receivers and backs. Remind players to keep pads over their knees for protection and players who are grossly out of compliance should be removed from the field until they are compliant. This is a **safety** issue that needs our attention.

Make sure you and your crewmates have all your information to the KSHSAA for Post-Season eligibility by the due date of October 3rd! There are still make-up meetings you can get to if you have missed an Area Meeting - check with Rick at the KSHSAA!