

**The TOA “Football Newsletter”
Week 2 – 2006**

If you’ve Heard it Once This Week, You’ve Heard it a Thousand Times: On all the talk-radio sports shows that are on, I know I have heard the following on every station: “Every football team makes its biggest improvement between weeks one and two!” So, of course I started to wonder if the same held true for officiating crews. Now is **not** the time to put away your rules books – your mechanics books – or your “Funny Books.” Our crew had a great game last week – a 17-16 game that was extremely well played and hard hitting. But, each of the officials on the crew can go back and think of three or four “little mistakes” that we made. For example, as the U for our crew, I tried, on two separate occasions, to mark the ball on the line to gain instead of on the down box, they were within a yard or so of each other and I simply was in too big a hurry (and, it was the new field at Bonner Springs and I really had no excuse as, of course, it was perfectly marked). Secondly, I tried to tell my Referee the wrong yardage on a penalty, and thirdly, I did not get to position on a kicked extra point in a timely manner. All of these things were items we discussed and being in too big a hurry caused momentary lapses in judgment.

Take an honest look at the mistakes you made last week and make a determination of exactly what you will do to correct them this week. Share this information with your crew mates. And, do the same each and every week. Secondly, take a fresh look at the “books” we have at our disposal and see if there is something new you can learn each day. Thirdly, make sure the quality of the pre-game conference is top-notch. All five officials should participate in the conference!

Game Management – the Chain Crew: We did not have any problems with the chain crew last week – nor did we have any problems with their new location (knock on wood). Here is a reminder sent my way by Dwight Neibling, one of the very best White Hats in the MIAA. He asks the person on the down box to move back to the sideline after incomplete passes. That gives us a much better opportunity to get the ball back exactly where it was when it is placed for the next down. I’ve been around college football for a long time and around the Big XII for ten years and I had never heard that mechanic stated before! It may not be news to you but it sure was to me.

Reminder to Coaches and Officials: Remember that the rules dictate that jerseys must be tucked in – this is a rule and it must be enforced. Last week I really had to look at members of the home team – they had black shirts and black pants. Of course, the visitors had white shirts and colored pants and it was much easier to detect shirts that were out – the rule is there, enforce it. Remember, the head coach certified that his players were properly equipped – and that they have been taught how to properly wear that equipment. That includes uniforms!

Ethics and Integrity: Over the next couple of weeks, we’ll examine parts of an article written in the National Federation’s *Official’s Quarterly*. The article deals with the “Official’s Code of Ethics.” The author, Tim Carr, makes an excellent point that successful people have a code of behavior that is used to establish the way we deal with people in everyday situations. Here is one of the standards he lists for officials: *Officials shall master both the rules and the mechanics necessary to exercise authority in an*

impartial, firm, and controlled manner. Easy enough to understand in principal but very difficult to execute when we have lost control of our emotions and we get caught up in the passion of the game. Our very nature tells us that we should retaliate when a coach is questioning the only trait that we have to fall upon – our integrity that is our sense that it is extremely important to do the right thing, even in the face of all the criticism that comes our way. Last Friday we had two of the finest coaches we have been around in a long time – it was an evenly matched game; it was close 17 – 16; there was a large crowd celebrating a new field and refurbished stadium; both teams had rulings go against them at a critical moment. They professionally asked questions when appropriate and professionally accepted our decisions and got on with planning for the next play. What more could we ask? Have coaches act this professionally every week?

Keep getting better every week. Frank