

## **Points of Emphasis**

### **Protection of Defenseless Players**

The 2008 committee introduced a separate rule prohibiting initiating contact with and targeting a defenseless opponent (Rule 9-1-3).

The following are situations in which defenseless players are susceptible to serious injury:

- The quarterback moving down the line of scrimmage who has handed or pitched the ball to a teammate, and then makes no attempt to participate further in the play;
- The kicker who is in the act of kicking the ball, or who has not had a reasonable length of time to regain his balance after the kick;
- The passer who is in the act of throwing the ball, or who has not had a reasonable length of time to participate in the play again after releasing the ball;
- The pass receiver whose concentration is on the ball;
- The pass receiver who has clearly relaxed when the pass is no longer catchable;
- The kick receiver whose attention is on the downward flight of the ball;
- The kick receiver who has just touched the ball;
- The player who has relaxed once the ball has become dead; and
- The player who is obviously out of the play.

These players are protected by rules that have been in place for many years. It is of the utmost importance that participants, coaches and game officials carefully and diligently observe safety rules.

Intentional helmet-to-helmet contact is never legal, nor is any other blow directed toward an opponent's head. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified.

### **Sideline Control**

NCAA member institutions and conferences should develop plans to enforce the rules regarding the team area and coaching box (Rule 1-2-4-a, back of the **limit lines between the 25-yard lines**), and the space between the limit lines (Rules 1-2-3-a and b, **12 feet outside the sidelines and the end line**) and the sidelines.

### **Equipment**

Before each contest, coaches should verify that all players:

- a. Have been informed what equipment is mandatory by rule and what constitutes illegal equipment.
- b. Have been provided the equipment mandated by rule.
- c. Have been instructed to wear, and how to wear, mandatory equipment during the game.
- d. Have been instructed to notify the coaching staff when equipment becomes illegal through play during the game.

Players have an important responsibility in wearing pads properly and adhering to team dress codes.

## **Coaching Ethics**

Deliberately teaching players to violate the rules is indefensible. The coaching of intentional holding, beating the ball, illegal shifting, feigning injury, interference, illegal forward passing or intentional roughing will break down rather than aid in the building of the character of players. Such instruction is not only unfair to one's opponent but is demoralizing to the players entrusted to a coach's care and has no place in a game that is an integral part of an educational program.

The following are unethical practices:

- a. Changing numbers during the game to deceive the opponent.
- b. Using the football helmet as a weapon. The helmet is for the protection of the player.
- c. Using a self-propelled mechanical apparatus in the teaching of blocking and tackling.
- d. Spearing. Players, coaches and officials should emphasize the elimination of spearing.
- e. Using nontherapeutic drugs in the game of football. This is not in keeping with the aims and purposes of amateur athletics and is prohibited.
- f. "Beating the ball" by an unfair use of a starting signal. This is nothing less than deliberately stealing an advantage from the opponent. An honest starting signal is needed, but a signal that has for its purpose starting the team a fraction of a second before the ball is put in play, in the hope that it will not be detected by the officials, is illegal. It is the same as if a sprinter in a 100-meter dash had a secret arrangement with the starter to give him a tenth-of-a-second warning before firing the pistol.
- g. Shifting in a way that simulates the start of a play or employing any other unfair tactic for the purpose of drawing one's opponent offside. This can be construed only as a deliberate attempt to gain an unmerited advantage.
- h. Feigning an injury for the purpose of gaining additional, undeserved time for one's team. An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules. Such tactics cannot be tolerated among sportsmen of integrity.

## **Talking to an Opponent**

Talking to an opponent in any manner that is demeaning, vulgar, abusive or "trashy" or intended to incite a physical response or verbally put an opponent down is illegal. Coaches are urged to discuss this conduct frequently and support all officials' actions to control it.

## **Holding**

Illegal use of the hand or arm is unfair play, eliminates skill and does not belong in the game. The object of the game is to advance the ball by strategy, skill and speed without illegally holding your opponent. All coaches and players should thoroughly understand the rules for proper offensive and defensive use of the hands. Holding is a frequently called penalty; it is important to emphasize the severity of the penalty.

## **Sportsmanship**

The football player or coach who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct; and whether or not he escapes being penalized, he brings discredit to the good name of the game, which is his duty as a player or coach to uphold.

## **Rules Changes for 2008**

### **Chop Block (2-3-3)**

ARTICLE 3. A chop block is a high-low or low-high combination block by any two players against an opponent (not the runner) anywhere on the field, with or without a delay between contacts; the “low” component is at the opponent’s thigh or below (A.R. 2-3-3-III and IV). 15 yard penalty.

### **Horse Collar Tackle (9-1-2-p)**

p. All players are prohibited from grabbing the inside back collar of the shoulder pads or jersey, or the inside collar of the side of the shoulder pads or jersey, and immediately pulling the runner down. This does not apply to a runner who is inside the tackle box or to a quarterback who is in the pocket. 15 yard penalty

### **Face Mask – no more 5 yd penalty (9-1-2q)**

q. No player shall twist, turn or pull the face mask or any helmet opening of an opponent. It is not a foul if the face mask or helmet opening is not twisted, turned or pulled. When in question, it is a foul (A.R. 9-1-2-XV). 15 yard penalty.

### **Initiating Contact/Targeting an Opponent (9-1-3)**

ARTICLE 3. a. No player shall initiate contact and target an opponent with the crown (top) of his helmet. When in question, it is a foul. b. No player shall initiate contact and target a defenseless opponent above the shoulders. When in question, it is a foul. 15 yard penalty.

### **Sideline warning changed to sideline interference (9-1-6)**

ARTICLE 6. While the ball is in play, coaches, substitutes and authorized attendants in the team area may not be between the sideline and coaching line or on the field of play.

The restricted area (official’s area) begins at the sideline and is 6 feet deep.

The coaching box begins 6 feet from the sideline and is 6 feet deep.

The team area begins 12 feet from the sideline and extends between the 25 yd lines.

Penalty - Administer as a dead-ball foul.

(TIFI rule 15.01 allows for one warning per game)

First and second infractions: Delay of game for sideline interference, five yards from the succeeding spot.

Third and subsequent infractions: Unsportsmanlike conduct for sideline interference, 15 yards from the succeeding spot.

## **Suggestions and Observations**

If you don't get all of your plays in, it is your fault. Do not attempt to blame the officials or anyone else. Violation of this rule carries a stiff penalty for a reason.

Discuss inappropriate player behavior with your team.

Example: Do not allow any player or team celebration on the field of play. Save these activities for the team area. Is it worth a 15 yard penalty, or possibly disallowing a score?

Please have water and water boys ready during the game.

Water breaks are usually allowed (but not required) near the 4-minute mark of each quarter. This is an official's timeout and coaching is not allowed.

If the snap is imminent, the mouthpiece (chinstrap, and all required equipment) must be in place. You will be charged a team timeout if you have one available. 5 yard delay of game, if you have no remaining timeouts.

Get your subs on and off the field quickly, and count your players. The officials will try to help you in this area, but this is ultimately your responsibility. Substitution infraction is 5 yards. Illegal participation is 15 yards.

The head coach is responsible for his coaches and his team. The head coach is the spokesman for the team. He should ask for an explanation from the officials if he does not understand what or why regarding a game situation. Trying to argue with an official will not typically help you or your team.

Use your timeouts wisely. It is not uncommon for professional teams to line up and successfully run a play in 10 seconds or less. Youth league teams typically do not have the capability to do this.