



2024 Football Memo – Pre-Season II

August 5, 2024

2024 NFHS MECHANICS

You should have received your new NFHS Football Game Officials Manual for 2024-2025. It is important to study this manual to understand the mechanics of football officiating for the upcoming season. We are going to highlight a few sections of this manual in this newsletter.

Pregame Administration

The game officials should enter the field together at least 30 minutes before game time. Each member of the crew has responsibilities when they get on the field. All game officials should spend some time warming up. Once the pregame tasks are completed, the game officials should observe both teams for information that will be helpful during the game. The crew should avoid non-essential chat with players, coaches, spectators, or others, especially if it could give the appearance of favoritism. See pages 13-16 and 23-24.

- Referee
 - Meet with coaches
 - Inspect the field
 - Spot check players for equipment violations
 - Check with crew to make sure all pregame tasks are completed
- Umpire
 - Meet with coaches
 - Inspect the field
 - Spot check players for equipment violations
- Head Linesman
 - Inspect the field
 - Inspect down indicator and chains
 - Meet with line-to gain crew
- Line Judge
 - Inspect field
 - Keep track of the game balls (crew of four)
 - Meet with ball helpers and timer (crew of four)
 - Meet with auxiliary down indicator operator (when applicable)
- Back Judge
 - Inspect the field
 - Keep track of the game balls (crew of five)
 - Meet with the ball helpers and timer (crew of five)



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Clock Management

It is important to keep a good pace of play throughout the game. There are a number of points of emphasis in the new 2024 Officials Manual that help with pace of play. See page 6.

- A good reminder is that after a 1st down in-bounds, the Ready-For-Play (silent wind) should not be delayed if the chain crew is still moving to its new position.

Importance of Dead-Ball Officiating

The most crucial time for game officials to continue to perform their duties to maintain decorum among opponents is when the ball becomes dead. See page 7.

- Recognizing unsportsmanlike actions requires game officials to maintain appropriate distance and angles after play so that all 22 players are within view. (Halo Principle) See pages 29-30.

Whistle Mechanics

To prevent inadvertent whistles, it is important to review the whistle mechanics. See page 22.

- The referee, umpire, head linesman, and line judge should strongly consider having the whistle in their mouths prior to the snap in case of a dead-ball foul occurs or a team's timeout request is granted.
- Once the snap occurs, it is strongly recommended that no game official have a whistle in the mouth until the ball becomes dead.

Fumbles

Officials have specific duties when a pile forms on top of a fumble. The ball will be spotted, and the process will be much simpler if each crew member does his/her job. See pages 30-32.

Snap Location After Kick or Penalty

It is important to know where to start a new series laterally after kicks, especially free kick out-of-bounds. It is also important to know where the previous spot is in penalty enforcement. See pages 32-34.

- Umpire should use the Play-Pics A-E on page 34 to help remember these lateral spots.



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Head Linesman and Line Judge Switching Sidelines (SDHSAA only)

This is a mandatory switch for all games. The chains stay located on the same sideline as designated by the host. Line Judge starts with the chains and works throughout the first half. Head Linesman works the second half and subsequent periods on the chain side. Prepare as necessary to accommodate all associated mechanics and positioning on measurements, scrimmage plays, scrimmage kicks, and free kicks.

The purpose for the change is equal exposure to the coaches/sideline for the contest. Other leagues/divisions/levels have found communication and consistency with coaches have improved. There has been a benefit when we have officials work in front the team for equal or mostly equal game time.

Best of luck for a safe and successful
2024 SDHSAA football season

Remember, MIBT = Make it be there

For suggestions, feedback, and comments, please feel free to contact.

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