**2014 Football Bulletin V**

**September 18, 2014**

To: Commissioners, Board Interpreters, Curriculum reps, CIAC and league reps, media.

From: Bill Riccio, Jr. State Interpreter

1. **Positional observations**
2. Referees
3. Some referees are still moving close to the line of scrimmage to declare the ball Ready-for-Play. With five officials on the field, there is little need for Referees to get that close. The manual recommends a deeper and wider positioning (14-15 yards back, outside the TE). Some Referees are taking a wide stance 7 or more yards off the TE and like the position. In any case, the RFP should be whistled 10 or more yards deep so ECO can see it, particularly if there is a start of the clock.
4. Don’t forget the preliminary signal – Sometimes in the effort to enforce a penalty, the Referee gets involved in something and does not give a preliminary signal. This is important, particularly on fouls such as holding, DPI, OPI, etc. The coaching staffs have to know what is happening and can aid in making the decision.

The only time a preliminary signal is not necessary is a false start/encroachment violation, where one signal suffices.

1. Umpires
2. With the use of bubble screens and other short passes Umpires have to get up to the line of scrimmage to rule on whether the catch is behind or beyond the line. This is particularly important if the pass “floats” beyond the line because of a miscue. We’re going to have ineligibles down field.

Umpires should “punch back” if the ball is caught in or behind the line to signal the crew and everyone else.

1. Wings
2. That six-foot area around the field is yours. Use it. Officials should work off the field with at least their toes touching the sidelines. It is better that your heels are at the back of the six-foot area. This establishes that area as yours while the ball is in play, and it helps keep the team in its team area. Teams and coaches are going to creep up as far as you let them. By establishing that six-foot band as yours, you’re setting the standard.
3. Off-wing officials should be ready to rule on forward/backward in the case of a pass play. Most times they have the best angle on whether a pass is forward. Talk about his in the pre-game conference.
4. With regard to backward/forward, we recommend no “punch back” signal on a backward pass. The fact no whistle is sounding during a loose ball should be enough.
5. Line Judges have to help the Back Judge on punts, not only with gunners, but with potential fair catch signals. They also should be aware of the action in front of a receiver. That’s where pushes in the back and other things happen.
6. From the 10 yard line in, the wings have to beat the runner to the pylon in order to rule the goal line. Stay wide. You will be able to see whether the runner goes out of bounds before or after crossing the goal.
7. Back Judges
8. Keep your cushion. Back judges have to maintain that cushion with receivers if they are to be in position to rule. Keep a wide vision. The closer the receiver is to you, the less likely you will see something.
9. Don’t give a signal for a TD in the field of play. This dovetails with the statement above. If you do get beat, and a player runs for a score, don’t signal on the run or at the three yard line. Signal when you get to the goal line.
10. Crews
11. Communication on penalty enforcements is important, particularly status of the ball and status of the clock. Referees and Umpires have no idea what is going on downfield (e.g. whether a pass is incomplete, complete or intercepted, or whether there was a fumble). They have to be told in order to enforce a penalty – or decline it if there is a change of possession.
12. See if one or both of your teams have statisticians on the sideline – or use a media reporter who is charting plays. We don’t have professional chain crews, and sometimes chains are moved when they shouldn’t be. Knowing where the LOS was and the down/distance can be a crew saver.
13. **There is no need for everyone to blow a whistle on every play**. That went out with the T-formation. Covering officials should sound their whistles. Other officials should only sound a whistle if they need to alert players the play is over; otherwise, keep it out of your mouth.
14. Review Inadvertent Whistle Rules – Remember the key to IAW rules is “team possession” not necessarily “player possession.” Which team had possession of the ball when the whistle sounded?

Also, if there is a live-ball penalty prior to the inadvertent whistle the penalty is enforced as if the whistle never occurred.

What’s the best way not to have an IAW? Keep the whistle out of your mouth and don’t blow the whistle unless you see the ball.

1. Crews should review defensive blocking restriction in the pre-game conference. Linebackers are still attempting to breakdown interference on a running play by blocking below the waist.

That’s it for now,

Bill Riccio, Jr.