

# NJFOA OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES AND PRINCIPLES -- 2020

This document consolidates the officiating philosophies and principles espoused by leadership of all NJFOA chapters and is endorsed by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association.



*Version 5.0 (2020)*

# NJFOA Officiating Philosophies and Principles -- 2020

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## PROLOGUE

All athletics, and football specifically, are governed by a concrete and discrete set of playing rules designed to ensure that each competitor is guaranteed a fair chance of success. In football, these rules are structured so as to provide a balance between offense and defense. They are designed to guarantee that neither party is disadvantaged and that a level playing field is provided for both competitors. The rules, however, are written in the proverbial “black and white,” whereas proper application of these rules to game situations requires acknowledgement of some shades of gray in order to ensure game flow.

The “proper application of these rules” involves three intersecting competencies:

1. **Knowledge of the rules**, including the areas of equipment, timing, the passing game, the kicking game, penalty enforcement, etc. A strong working knowledge of the National Federation of High Schools Rule Book and Case Book is a must-have to provide the basics for this competency.
2. **A universally accepted set of officiating techniques** and mechanics designed to ensure that all officials are positioned correctly and looking at the right things at the right times to ensure that the rules can be enforced properly. We took a giant leap in this area with the introduction and statewide deployment of the *NJFOA Six-Man Mechanics Manual* in 2014.
3. Finally, officials need a firm but flexible understanding of the *intent* of the rules. Just what is it that the rules makers intended by a rule or by implementation of a rule change? What aspects of the game precipitated the rule or change? How should we interpret the game rules to get precisely to the point where the intent of the rules makers is being realized? The answer to these questions is **a guiding set of officiating philosophies and principles**. It is the intention of this document to provide that for all NJFOA members with the endorsement of the NJSIAA.

The best way to ensure a good chance of properly applying the rules is to be in the correct position and follow this formula:

1. See the entire play.
2. Don't guess. If you haven't seen the entire play, it is better to withhold a flag than to make an assumption about what might have occurred and throw a flag, only to be found incorrect on film.
3. Before you decide to penalize and throw a flag, ask yourself, “Did I see the entire play? Am I sure it was a foul? And did it have an impact on the play?” If you can answer ‘yes’ to all three, then penalize. If you answer ‘no’ to any one of the three questions, then keep the flag in your pocket.

The beauty of football officiating is that you have a few seconds to think, before making or not making a call. Use the time. Make sure. And before your decision, filter the situation through the philosophies contained in this document. Late is better than wrong!!!

Please take the time to review all of these philosophies with your crew. Commit to making them a part of your pre-game discussions.

NOTE: All substantive changes from, or additions to last season's manual are diff-marked in **gray highlighting**.

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### **PHILOSOPHIES/PRINCIPLES**

#### **Ball Spotting**

- The ball can be placed on a yard line to begin the next series after a change possession. For example, if a punt return ends with the ball between team B's 33- and 34-yard lines, move the ball forward to team B's 34-yard line. At all other times, the ball is placed where it became dead. (Exception: If the change of possession occurs on a fourth-down running or passing play, the ball will be left at the dead-ball spot to begin the next series.)

#### **Safety Related and Helmet Contact**

- Contacting an opponent with the helmet in an attempt to punish is always a foul and may result in a disqualification.
- Illegal helmet contact of any kind is a major point of emphasis and should be penalized anytime an official sees this occur. Remember, the initial contact must be with the helmet. When in doubt, err on the side of safety.
- A helmetless player shall not block, tackle, or otherwise participate beyond the "immediate action" in which the player is engaged when the helmet came completely off. Likewise, it's also a foul (personal foul) for an opponent to engage a helmetless player unless it is part of the "immediate action." Use the following guidelines to determine "immediate action:"
  1. If a player makes contact with an opponent whose helmet has come completely off, then officials must determine the speed, distance and direction of the player before he made contact with the helmetless player. For instance, if player A's helmet comes off, and Player B, the opponent, makes contact, but player B was running at a fast speed, was within one yard of the opponent, and never altered his direction, then the contact would be judged legal. If he changes direction in any way or is more than one yd. away prior to contact, then this should be called a foul.
  2. If a player loses his helmet and is engaged with another player, he can continue to block in order to protect himself, but once the players become disengaged, the player must cease to participate. Conversely, if a player is engaged with an opponent whose helmet comes off, he should disengage, but can continue contact until disengaged.
- When a player is hit after giving himself up, it is a personal foul and may result in a disqualification. "Giving himself up" is any act in which a runner ceases to attempt a further advance by intentionally making the ball dead, e.g. purposefully stepping out of bounds, taking a knee, executing a feet-first slide, going to the ground, or by standing still with possession of a live ball and making no attempt to advance.
- Hit with an arm, shoulder or helmet on a defenseless player above the shoulders is a personal foul and may result in a disqualification, e.g., quarterback, kicker, receiver, holder, player who is no longer actively participating in the play, player with no helmet, kick returner and open-field upright player.

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### Line of Scrimmage

- Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legally on the LOS and will call a foul only when obvious or where repeated warnings are ignored. If the offensive lineman is lined up with his head clearly behind the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning. Don't wait till the fourth quarter to enforce the rule. Also, on passing and scrimmage kick plays, any bowing of the tackles that puts them in an illegal formation will be penalized without warning. On those plays, that bowing provides an illegal advantage to the offense.
- Don't be technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back in determining if he is off the line of scrimmage. When in question, it is not a foul.
- In order to call an ineligible receiver downfield you must see the ineligible player more than two yards downfield at the time the ball is released. If you do not know the exact location of the downfield player when the ball is released, do not call it. If the pass does not go more than two yards beyond the LOS, ignore the ineligible downfield.
- Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal ('letter-of-the-law').
- If an offensive player or substitute fails to be inside the numbers following the ready for play but is covered by the defense and thus has gained no advantage, do not flag it as an illegal formation, but be sure to talk to the offending player and his coach about this.
- A quick or abrupt movement by the offense that causes the defense to jump into the neutral zone, including by the QB, WR's and RB's, is a false start and should not be considered illegal motion or a shift.
- Wide receivers or slot backs lined up outside a tight end will be ruled on the line of scrimmage and covering the tight end if there is no stagger between their alignments. If in question, the tight end is not covered up.
- If the center adjusts the ball, and in so doing, moves it slightly forward after the defense has established position on the LOS, the defense should not be penalized for encroachment as they have been put into this position by actions of the offense.

### False starts

- A flinch by an offensive player—even a subtle flinch—is a false start. Lineman, receivers, and backs. No offensive player is allowed to flinch, abruptly move, or simulate action at the snap. Receivers and backs cannot 'reset' to become legal after a flinch/false start. While not "locked" as interior linemen are, any pre-snap movement by backs or receivers must be smooth and slow enough to not simulate the snap. Any abrupt, jerky, or clearly mistaken pre-snap movement which appears to be the start of a play is a false start.
- When in question, a quick or abrupt movement by the snapper or quarterback is a false start. This includes an abrupt 'chucking' of the QB's hands toward the snapper from the shotgun formation.
- A QB lifting a foot to send a teammate in motion or to signal he is ready for a shotgun snap is not a false start.

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- If an eligible offensive player is going from a 2-point stance to a 3-point stance when the ball is snapped, it is illegal motion (allow the play to continue) and not a false start.
- Excessive QB head bobs or jerks are false starts. QB hard counts are not fouls. Clapping by a shotgun QB for use as a cadence is not a false start unless it is accompanied by an abrupt movement of the body or head, or a chuck of the hands that simulates the start of a play.
- Ineligible offensive linemen who have their hand on or near the ground can turn and look at the QB to hear the signals provided their movement is slow and they do not lift their hand(s). Be alert for the defense calling the offensive snap count that causes a false start. This is a foul by the defense.
- Pointing at the defender as part of the offensive signals is not a false start.
- If the center flinches or head bobs, this is a false start. If he moves the ball, simulating the beginning of the play or appreciably changes the spot of the snap, but does not complete the snap, this is an illegal snap. Be especially aware of this on 4th downs or short yardage situations.

### Defensive Pass Interference (DPI)

- All eligible players have a right to the ball and there must be an obvious action that impedes to rule pass interference.
- Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include the following six categories:
  1. Early **Not Playing the Ball Contact** by a defender is defensive pass interference provided the contact results in some form of restriction or physical concussion. This includes tangled feet if the defender is not playing the ball.
  2. **Playing through the back** of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
  3. **Grabbing and Restricting** a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
  4. Extending an arm across the body (**Arm Bar**) of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of the fact of whether or not the defender is looking for the ball.
  5. **Cutting Off** or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball.
  6. **Hooking and restricting** a receiver in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that is causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.

**Reminder** -- Face Guarding is no longer a foul based on a 2017 rule change

### Not Defensive Pass Interference

- When there are tangled feet and both players are looking back at the ball or neither player is looking back at the ball, this action does not constitute pass interference.
- When each player is making a legitimate play on the ball and there is shoulder to shoulder contact by players coming from different angles, this action does not constitute pass interference.
- When the contact is so close to the touching of the pass that's it's difficult to determine which occurred first (we refer to it as 'bang-bang'), this action does not constitute pass interference.

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- When a defender places a hand on a receiver's body but does not initiate a turn or twist, or a pull or push, this action does not constitute pass interference.
- Incidental contact by a defender's hands, arm or body when both players are competing for the ball or neither player is looking for the ball should not be ruled pass interference. If there is any question whether contact is incidental, the ruling shall be no interference.
- Laying a hand on a receiver that does not restrict the receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball is not pass interference.

### Offensive Pass Interference (OPI)

- Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include the following four categories:
  1. Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off, thus **Creating Separation** in an attempt to catch a pass.
  2. **Driving Thru** a defender who has established a position on the field.
  3. **Pick Play**: one receiver initiating contact with a defender downfield in order to prevent him from making a play on a ball thrown to another receiver in the same area. There must be contact to flag a pick.
  4. Picking off a defender who is attempting to cover a receiver.
- If the pass has not been thrown and the block occurs anywhere down field, call OPI if the pass subsequently crosses the line of scrimmage by 2 yards or more
- If the pass is in flight, and then a block occurs in that third of the field where the pass is thrown, or in an adjacent third of the field, call OPI.

### Not Offensive Pass Interference

- OPI will not be called on a screen pass where the ball is overthrown behind the LOS but subsequently lands 2 yards or less beyond the LOS and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents or hinders a defensive player from making a play on the ball.
- It is not OPI or DPI if contact is made by an eligible player of A or B after the ball has been touched/tipped by any player.
- No OPI on a look-in pass where contact is shoulder to shoulder.
- It is not OPI on a pick play if the defensive player is blocking the offensive player when the contact occurs and the offensive receiver doesn't initiate a separate action, or if the contact occurs within one yard of the line of scrimmage.

### Passing Situations

- If the passer is hit and in the referee's judgment, the B player could have avoided the passer, a personal foul for roughing will be called. When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer
- When in question on action against the passer, if the defender's intent is to punish, it is roughing the passer.

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- Hits above the shoulder on the quarterback with anything, i.e. hand, helmet, etc. is a personal foul for roughing the passer.
- For contact to the front of the passer, when the defensive player has taken two (or more) steps after the ball has been thrown/released prior to contacting the passer, it is a foul for roughing the passer.
- If an interception is near the goal line and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, rule that the interception took place in the end zone rather than in the field of play.
- Intentional grounding is a Referee-only flag. If you work any other position and feel there are no receivers in the area you need to immediately get the information to the Referee. The Referee will then assess the status of the QB. Was his arm hit? Was he under pressure? Was he in the grasp and the throw altered as a result? Where was the QB when the ball was released? If the Referee determines there is grounding after evaluating your information and his observations, he will then drop a flag at the spot of the pass. In such cases, a late flag is both warranted and expected.
- On passes thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage, when in doubt, the pass is backward.
- On simultaneous catches, when in doubt, whoever comes up with the ball gets the ball.
- If the passer is contacted clearly before he starts his passing motion, then there will be a foul for intentional grounding if there is no eligible receiver in the vicinity of the pass.
- If the passer is contacted after he starts his passing motion, then it may be ruled no intentional grounding due to this contact.
- When in question as to whether the passer was behind or beyond the neutral zone when he released the ball, rule that he was behind the neutral zone.

### Blocking

- To have offensive holding, there must be a clear and visible material restriction: a pull, a yank, or a jerk. Make the defense “show you something” ...like trying to get away.
- Takedowns at the Point of Attack (POA), and/or in the open field, create special focus and should be called.
- If there is offensive or defensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, holding should not be called.
- For blocks in the back, the initial approach angle, contact and reason for the contact must be seen in order to call a foul. The force of the block could be slight and still a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner. Watch how the blocked player falls. If he falls flat on his face, the blocker’s contact was likely in the back; if he falls on his side or back, the blocker’s contact was likely a legal block.
- For blocks in the back, if one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back. The force of the block could be slight and still a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner or prevents him from making the play. If the force is clearly on the side, it is not a foul. If the blocker is in a “chase mode” all the contact must be on the side in order to be ruled a legal block.

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- Blocks that start on the side and subsequently end up in the back are not fouls as long as contact is maintained throughout the block.
- Blocks in the back that occur at or about the same time a runner is being tackled shall not be called, unless they are personal foul in nature.
- Blocks in the back that are personal fouls in nature should be called regardless of their timing relative to the runner being tackled.
- Illegal block in the back should not be called on fair catches or touchbacks unless it is at the point of attack or results in a personal foul.
- Illegal block in the back can still be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made or the touchback occurs, and contact is slight (personal foul type actions should always be called).
- Rarely should you have a hold on a double team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back.
- A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be defensive holding if other criteria are met and could also be defensive pass interference.
- Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.
- When in question, if an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.
- On potential illegal blocks below the waist, be sure that the initial contact was below the waist before you drop a flag. If you did not see the initial contact, keep the flag in your pocket.
- In shotgun or punt formations, Free Blocking Zone (FBZ) legal blocks below the waist have to be initiated simultaneously with the snap and in accordance with the FBZ rule. In order for linemen to legally block below the waist in a shotgun/punt formations they must be in a three or four point stance and immediately fire into the defensive line at the snap—no stand and reload permitted. Players in a two-point stance will be prohibited from low blocking in a shotgun or scrimmage kick formation in all cases, as the ball will have clearly left the FBZ before any such blocks can take place.

**Blindside Blocks** If a player makes initial contact with open hands in the legal contact area (shoulders to waist-front or side body) even if the opponent, because of physical positioning and focus of concentration, is vulnerable to injury, the block will be considered legal. Of course, any contact that an official considered to be excessive with intent to injure an opponent would be considered illegal, and subject the blocker to disqualification for flagrant personal conduct

- A standard to use in determining a **blindside block** is the following: The blocker is moving parallel to the LOS or moving backward towards his end line and makes contact with an opponent in the legal blocking area (shoulders to waist; front or side of body). If forcible contact is with any part of his body (shoulder or helmet) other than with hands first, then the contact would be considered illegal.



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### Kicking Situations

- **Before each free kick, all officials should make note of and confirm with each other the time on the game clock.** This may become important near the end of the half or the game—especially on short kicks where the ECO may incorrectly start (or not start) the game clock as required.
- On free kicks where the down ends very quickly after a previously untouched kick is recovered, use the following guidelines for determining the correct amount of time that should have come off the game clock:
  - When a Team R player cleanly catches or recovers a kick while on the ground, no time should come off the clock.
  - When a Team R player cleanly catches or recovers a kick while on his feet and then without any delay goes to the ground, one (1) second should expire from the game clock.
  - When a Team K player cleanly recovers an untouched kick, no time should expire from the game clock.
  - When a Team R player cleanly completes a fair catch, no time should expire from the game clock.
- The kicker's restraining line on onside and short, pooch kick-offs should be officiated as a plane and any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for encroachment. The same plane applies on normal kick-offs, but officials should not be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.
- For deep kick-offs, the kicking team player's foot must be on the ground beyond the line or the player's entire body if he is airborne to be called encroachment. When in doubt, legal.
- It shall always be roughing the kicker if there is forcible contact to the plant leg, whether that leg is on the ground or not. It shall be running into the kicker if a defender simply "runs through" the kicking leg. All other contact shall be judged based on the severity of contact and the potential for injury.
- Punts or kick-offs - A receiver moving into position or in position to make a catch must not be contacted or diverted until he has had an opportunity to complete the catch. Contact is not necessary for kick catch interference as the receiver must be given an "unmolested opportunity" to make the catch.
- Punts or kick-offs - A poison signal by the receiving team will result in the ball being declared dead when caught or recovered by any player. This philosophy prevents the receiving team from deceiving the kicking team in to thinking that they have given up on the play.
- If a kick is near the receiver's goal line and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or in the receiver's end zone, rule that possession was gained in the end zone and the play results in a touchback.

### Runner Down and Making a Catch

- When in doubt, the runner is down and has not fumbled the ball.
- If the runner is being held by only one opponent, let the play continue; if he is held by two or more, rule forward progress stopped. Look for the runner's 'neutral legs,' i.e. the runner is no longer able to use his legs to advance.

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- The ground cannot cause a fumble but it can cause an incompleteness.
- If no official sees that the ball has hit the ground, rule the pass complete.
- The ankle or wrist are considered part of the foot or hand, respectively and do not make a runner down.
- When in doubt, the pass is incomplete vs. the ball caught and then fumbled. The act of making a catch is a process that includes maintaining control of the ball throughout the entire act. If a player has control of the ball but, and in the act of making the catch, comes to the ground and loses control causing the pass to hit the ground, it will be considered incomplete. If he is upright and immediately hit, he must maintain control of the ball or it is considered incomplete. The time period for judging a catch is sometimes called the making of a "football-related move."
- If a receiver who is airborne controls the ball and is either contacted or falls to the ground on his own, whether in-bounds or out-of-bounds, he must maintain control of the ball through his fall to be awarded a catch. If ball never touches ground, receiver can regain control as long as he remains inbounds.
- If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out-of-bounds it will be considered a legal hit and not a late hit out of bounds. However, there are rare situations when a runner/QB is not moving forward and clearly moving OOB in order to protect himself (giving himself up) where a punishing hit would be considered unnecessary roughness.
- Hitting a runner continuing down the side-line: If a whistle has blown and the player has eased up this is a foul. If he continues an aggressive run, you will have to judge the contact and if it should result in a foul.
- When in question, the runner did not step out of bounds.

### Scoring Plays

- When in question, it is not a touchdown.
- When in question, it is not a safety.
- An airborne player crossing the goal at the pylon, the position of the ball determines if it's a touchdown or out of bounds. When in question it is a touchdown.

### Game Clock & Play Clock

- All obvious and material game clock errors should be corrected. In the last five minutes of either half, ALL officials must be aware of the clock, and then even small, seemingly insignificant, errors will be corrected. If everyone in the stadium is looking at the clock, we need to know the status.
- Any time lost due to the game clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called prior to the snap, the clock must be adjusted.
- **2017 Timing Rule Interpretation**

The timing rule now prevents the team in possession of the ball from using a foul in an attempt to consume time at the end of any half. Rule 3-4-7 - The offended team has the option to start the game clock on the snap for an accepted penalty in the last two minutes of either half.

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With **2:00 minutes** or less to go in the half), the referee will apply the following: Should team A or B commit a foul that prevents the ball from becoming alive or commits a live ball foul (motion, holding, etc.), or a dead ball foul after the play, the clock will stop and will start on the ready or snap based upon the offended team's choice—provided the clock was supposed to start on the referee's ready-for-play signal.

Case Play # 1 Team A is losing 28-21 with the clock running, and 1:35 seconds to play in the game. Team A commits a false start. Ruling: After enforcement of the penalty, the clock will start on the snap or ready based upon Team B's choice.

Case Play # 2 Team A has the ball on their own 5 yd. line with 1:59 seconds to play in the first half. Team A is called for holding on a running play that ends in bounds. Ruling: After enforcement of the penalty, the clock will start on the snap or ready based upon Team B's choice.

Case Play # 3 Team B commits a live ball personal foul against Team A with 1:23 seconds left in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. The play ends in bounds. Ruling; Team A has the option of starting the clock on the ready or snap.

Case Play #4 Team A (trailing by 3 points) with 1:59 is flagged for holding after a 20-yard gain. Following the play which ended inbounds, Team B commits a dead ball personal foul. Ruling: After enforcement of the two penalties, *either* team may choose to have to have clock started on the snap rather than on the ready for play.

Case Play # 5 Team A has the ball leading in score 30-27 with 2:18 seconds left in the game and the clock running when they false start or delay. Ruling: After enforcement of the penalty, the clock will start on the ready, if a false start, and on the snap, if delay of game.

Note: The clock can always be stopped by either team should they choose to call a time out.

Case Play # 6 With team A leading and the clock running with 1:53 seconds left in the contest, The HL informs the R that the chains are broken. Ruling: The R should use discretion in adjudicating an equitable solution. The Field Judge should inform the R of how much time has run off on the 25 sec count. When play resumes, the R will add that time back on to the game clock and then start the clock on the ready for play. This procedure resets the game clock to its original status when the ball was declared ready for play. Neither team is put at a disadvantage. It is important that the field judge has specific knowledge of the 25 sec count. This scenario could apply to any administrative halt of play while the clock is running (equipment, clock malfunction, injury, etc.)

### Miscellaneous

- Call a side-line warning at the end of a down without causing an interruption but be sure the Head Coach has had a prior verbal warning. Don't intentionally contact a coach or person in the box.
- 5-yard facemask fouls are rare but if it is a grasp and then let go, it can be called. When in question it is a 15-yard foul.

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- When in the 'victory formation' and making it known and clear that the QB will take a knee, don't allow a fake kneel down. Any movement of the QB's knee toward the ground is an indication to the defense that he has given himself up, and will cause the ball to become dead.
- Also, when in the victory formation, if the QB delays kneeling, but is not attempting to advance, blow the ball dead.
- If action is deemed to be "fighting", then the player must be disqualified. When in question, the player is not fighting.
- Spitting in the face of an opponent requires disqualification.
- When in question regarding hits away from the ball near the end of the play, consider it a dead-ball rather than live-ball foul.
- When in question whether the QB passed the ball or fumbled it, he passed it
- When in question as to whether the QB's pass was forward or backward, rule it a forward pass.
- When in question as to whether a player's (other than the QB) pass was forward or backward. -- rule it a backward pass.
- When in question as to whether the is runner down or fumbled prior to being down – rule the runner down.
- When in question as to whether a Block was in the Back or from the side – rule it a side Block
- When in question as to whether illegal personal contact was Fighting/Flagrant Act or Personal Foul Only -- rule it a Personal Foul Only
- When in question as to whether a foul occurred in the end zone or in the field of play – rule it to have occurred in the field of play.
- When in question whether a personal foul occurred during a live or dead ball, rule it a dead ball foul.
- A replaced player attempting to leave the field will be considered off the field if he is no more than one yard from the side-line when the ball is snapped.
- PLEASE REMEMBER...We (officials) do not send a player out for any reason other than injury or equipment. If we send a player out for a play because he is acting up, we have stepped into a coaching role and we do not belong there. If he is acting up, inform the coach and allow him to manage his team. If he commits a personal foul, call it, and let the coach manage his team.

### Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Do not be overly technical in applying rules related to celebration. Allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of a play.
- Beyond brief, spontaneous bursts of energy and emotional reaction, officials should penalize those acts that are clearly prolonged, self-congratulatory, or that make a mockery of the game or demean an opponent. Here is a list of specifically prohibited acts. The list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. All agree that when those acts are clearly intended to taunt or demean, they should be penalized.

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- a) Pointing the finger(s), hand(s), arm(s) or ball at an opponent, or imitating the slashing of the throat.
  - b) Taunting, baiting or ridiculing an opponent verbally.
  - c) Inciting an opponent or spectators in any other way, such as simulating the firing of a weapon or placing a hand by the ear to request recognition.
  - d) Any delayed, excessive, prolonged or choreographed act by which a player (or players) attempts to focus attention upon himself (or themselves), including purposefully moving further into the opponent's backfield to call attention to one's self after the ball has become dead.
  - e) An unopposed ball carrier obviously altering stride or strutting as he approaches the opponent's goal line or diving into the end zone.
  - f) Punching one's own chest or crossing one's arms in front of the chest while standing over a prone player.
  - g) Going into the stands to interact with spectators, or bowing at the waist after a good play (focusing attention upon himself)
- Conversely, the following acts are considered within the bounds of propriety and should not be flagged/penalized:
    - a) A quick raising of a finger and/or eyes to the sky
    - b) Two or three player spontaneous celebrations including 'high fives' or 'chest bumps', hugs or slaps on the back.
    - c) Dropping to a knee in a quick silent meditation or prayer.

A more complete discussion of the NJSIAA policy regarding unsportsmanlike conduct and protocols regarding player disqualification is included as Appendix A to this document.

### Last Two Minutes of Half/Game

#### Philosophy on Winding Clock Late in the Game

Know the timeout situation. If A is out of timeouts, know that they will call plays that end near the sideline and try to get out of bounds. ***The underlying philosophy is that they will sacrifice yards to get the clock stopped.***

#### If you have a runner who runs out of bounds, rule him out and stop the clock if:

- He is driven out parallel to his path.
- He is driven out even after contact takes him a step or two back. If he can stay upright and get out, take away the forward progress yardage you would normally give him and put him out.
- He dives with the ball or some part of his body hits the sideline even simultaneous with his knee hitting the ground inbounds.

#### Make him inbounds when:

- The runner's *forward* progress and attempt to advance is stopped and he is driven backwards or held up and there's a chance he may fumble or be stripped of the ball. Wind him in if he is short of the line to gain.

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- He is tackled/stopped inbounds and only a “second act” gets him out of bounds.

***“WHEN IN DOUBT, PUT HIM OUT.”***

Only the covering official should rule on whistle timing, progress spot and clock status.

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### APPENDIX A

#### NJSIAA Sportsmanship Policy

Procedure to be used if officials hear negative statements or see actions related to race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability, including vulgarity:

1. If the official(s) hear statements and can clearly identify what was said and who said it, then the player or coach would be immediately disqualified, and both head coaches should be informed of the disqualification and the reason for it.
2. Officials should write down the time, player(s) number, quarter, and what was said and to whom it was said. Multiple officials should record this information.
3. If an official hears statements or sees actions of this type but cannot clearly identify what was said or who said it, then he should immediately call time out. The referee and the official hearing the remarks will verbally warn both Head Coaches that such statements were heard, but they could not determine exactly who said them, or what was said.
4. If it is reported to an official that such negative statements are being made, that official should call timeout and the referee along with that official to whom it was reported, should likewise verbally warn both Head Coaches that such conduct has been reported.
5. For #3 and #4, both coaches should be told that if any subsequent negative statements by either team are heard, even if they are not attributable to a specific individual(s), an unsportsmanlike penalty will be assessed against the head coach. Officials should write down the time and quarter of that warning, and what was heard or reported.

#### Use of Profanity by Coaches or Other Team Personnel

- Use of profanity and disparaging remarks directed towards a player or players (their own or opponents) by coaches or any other team administrative or supplemental personnel is unacceptable. If heard by an official(s) and if the official can clearly identify the coach or other team personnel, he/she will be penalized.
- If heard, but the official cannot clearly identify who made the remark, then the head coach will be warned.
- Subsequent abusive language directed towards players, even if the official cannot identify the culprit, the Head Coach should be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Any remarks or actions that are racial, sexual, gender based, religious, ethnic or relating to one's disability will warrant automatic ejection. NJSIAA and the school's AD will be notified in writing per NJSIAA policy.

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### **Player Disqualification**

The rules clearly state that any player who commits a flagrant unsportsmanlike or personal foul should be disqualified from the game. As officials, you are responsible to make sure the game is played fairly and within the spirit of the rules. Player disqualification is a serious penalty in New Jersey. The NJSIAA does not allow for appeals.

Therefore, before a crew ejects a player(s) from a game, they should consider the following:

1. Are you confident that you have correctly identified the player (s) who committed the foul? If possible, confirm this identification with another official.
2. Are you confident that the foul(s) were clearly intentional, flagrant or unsporting.
3. Convene a conference as a crew (or at least the calling officials with the R) to review the play and the action. Write down the number(s) of the player(s) involved as well as the time and quarter of the penalty. Try to reach consensus as to whether the act warrants disqualification. When in doubt, as to whether the act was clearly flagrant, intentional or unsporting rising to the level of disqualification, you should penalize the player, but allow the player to remain in the game.
4. If a decision was made to disqualify, inform both head coaches of the outcome.