



IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Football Memo #3

August 28, 2024

Good morning football coaches and athletic directors –

I know it's been a trying week for each of you with the heat. While Friday looks great, today and tomorrow could still be a little warm. Just a few quick points before we kick off the season.

1. Targeting

One of the most common questions this time of year is about targeting and whether or not the penalty is the same as college and the NFL. In high school football, targeting is a 15-yard penalty. There is not an automatic ejection that comes with the penalty. However, as with other illegal personal contact penalties under 9-4 if the foul is judged to be flagrant, the athlete would be ejected. As with our other sports, we do not review or overturn judgment plays after the fact to determine whether or not an ejection was warranted or not.

2. Knee Pads and Eye Black

Coaches you are responsible that your athletes are wearing legal equipment as you do verify in the pregame that all on your team are properly equipped. Officials, these issues can and should be addressed during pregame. If we can be preventative prior to the game and work with both teams during the game, there shouldn't be an issue on Friday nights.

As we covered in the rules meeting, knee pads need to cover the knee and eye shade is allowed if a single stroke and doesn't include words, numbers, logos or other symbols. Products similar to a sleeve with a knee pad, similar to what is worn by some wrestlers, would meet the rule requirement.

Rule 1-5-5 covers missing and improperly worn required equipment, such as knee pads over the knee. If proper and legal equipment has become improperly worn through use but prompt repair is possible and does not delay the ready for play for more than 25 seconds, such repair may be made without replacing the player for at least one down. If the missing or improperly worn equipment is detected during the down or subsequent dead ball action related to the down without being directly attributable to a foul by the opponent or if a player is wearing otherwise legal equipment in an illegal manner, the player shall be replaced for at least one down unless halftime or overtime intermission occurs.

Unlike knee pads, eye shade is not required equipment and is governed by a different rule (1-5-3c). Eye shade not complying to these specifications is deemed illegal equipment with the player directed to leave until legally equipped and an unsportsmanlike foul charged to the head coach as the head coach verifies that all players are legally equipped in the pregame conference. Officials should only penalize the head coach with one unsportsmanlike foul even if multiple players are observed wearing illegal eye shade at the same time and are sent to the sideline at the same time to become legal. It would be an additional unsportsmanlike penalty on the head coach if players are observed with improper eye shade at different times in the ball game (i.e. noticed in first half, players reapply at halftime, noticed again in second half).

3. Statisticians Outside of Team Box

As in past years, we will allow statisticians to work up and down the field and outside of the team box. There are a few guidelines for these individuals to follow. First, the individuals need to remain behind the restraining line. Next, the individuals need to work with and listen to the officials working the contest. If the official believes the individual is interfering with his ability to work the contest, the statistician would need to listen to the official and move. (i.e. requesting more space towards the goal line). Finally, statisticians are just that. They are not coaches and should not be signaling in plays or voicing their concern over an official's call. I do struggle with these individuals wearing headsets out of the coaching box area as one has no idea who the individual is directly communicating with.

4. Guardian Caps

I've had a few schools reach out about athletes wearing Guardian Caps during games. Guardian caps are legal under NFHS rules. Schools, however, are strongly encouraged to check with the helmet manufacturer to see if the warranty is voided with the additional piece of equipment on the body of the helmet.

5. Game Film

I know video exchange guidelines run through the IFCA, but I ask schools to consider the following item for the season. When setting up your cameras on Friday night, attempt to discover whether the recording can be done without picking up the audio around the camera. While I understand that coaches and officials can mute their computer to not hear the audio, we believe some coaches/managers/etc. don't realize their voice is being recorded and as a result some inappropriate comments/language is making it onto the film describing their opponent or officiating crew from the previous Friday. In addition, we are hoping schools name their film each week with their school name and opponent and not simply as "Game."

Have a great game this week. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Jared Chizek