



Oregon School Activities Association

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August 10, 2015

To: Athletic Directors and Head Football Coaches
From: Brad Garrett, Assistant Executive Director
Subject: Football Reminders for the 2015 Season

Included within this memo are several items specific to football that I would like you to review with your staff as we begin a new fall season and other reminders to share with coaches and administrators.

1. Practice Model

The new Practice Model, in effect beginning August 17, will require most schools to change their practice structure. Please familiarize yourself with this policy. Notable requirements contained in the policy include:

- Prohibition on consecutive days of multiple practice sessions
- A teaching session as one of the practice sessions on the first two multiple practice days (the intensity, duration and pace of all practice components in a teaching session shall be modified from a normal practice session)
- Maximum of one hour of weight training before and/or after practice on a single practice session day. Players may only attend one weight training session on a single practice day.
- Helmets only on Days 1 and 2. Helmets and shoulder pads only on Day 3. Full protective equipment on Day 4.
- Beginning Week 3 teams are restricted to a maximum of 90 minutes of full contact in any week, excluding games. Full contact is defined using the USA Football definitions of levels of contact. Thud, and Live Action are considered "full contact" - a video showing these levels has been posted to the OSAA website at <http://www.osaa.org/activities/fbl/information/video>.
- On multiple session practice days only one of those sessions can include "full contact" as defined above.

2. Participation Limitations – The following limitations are in place for the 2015 football season

- 1) Daily. A student shall not compete in more than four quarters each day. Participation in any play in a quarter shall constitute participation in that quarter. If a student appears in more than four quarters in a day, the game in which the student exceeds the limit shall be forfeited.

NOTE: A student may be allowed a fifth quarter of participation if the student plays 12 plays or less in any two of the student's first four quarters that day.

- 2) Weekly. A student shall not compete in more than five quarters each week with the week defined as running from Tuesday through Monday. Participation in any play in a quarter shall constitute participation in that quarter. If a student appears in more than five quarters in one week, the game in which the student exceeds the limit shall be forfeited.

NOTE: A student may be allowed a sixth quarter of participation if the student plays 12 plays or less in any two of the student's first five quarters that week.

1. Q. May a student participate in two quarters at the varsity level during one week and three quarters at the JV level during another week and count the participation as one game?
- A. No. At all classifications, in order for quarters at multiple levels to be counted as one game under the individual participation limitation, the participation must occur during the same week running from Tuesday through Monday.
2. Q. May a student play 12 plays or less in his fifth quarter of a day (or sixth quarter in a week) and count that as one of the two quarters of 12 plays or less?
- A. No. The allowance of a fifth quarter in a day (or sixth quarter in a week) can only be triggered by two quarters of 12 plays or less during the student's first four quarters in a day (or first five quarters in a week).
3. Q. May a student be allowed a sixth quarter in a day (or seventh quarter in a week) by playing four quarters of 12 plays or less?
- A. No. A maximum of one additional quarter may be allowed in a day (or a week). Even with the allowance of an additional quarter, there is no scenario under which a student may play more than five quarters in a day (or six quarters in a week).

3. Heat Index - Athletic Directors and coaches should subscribe to heat alerts through the OSAA website at <http://www.osaa.org/heat-index>. Alerts are sent about 11am daily when the forecasted heat index in your area is high. If an alert is received, the policy requires that schools check the actual heat index within one hour prior to the start of practice to determine if modifications must be made. If no alert is received, no action is required by the school.
4. Lightning Safety Guidelines – The OSAA has made a concerted effort to educate member schools and officials associations regarding the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. Once thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a visible lightning strike or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, all personnel, athletes and spectators should evacuate to available safe structures or shelters.

Proactive Planning:

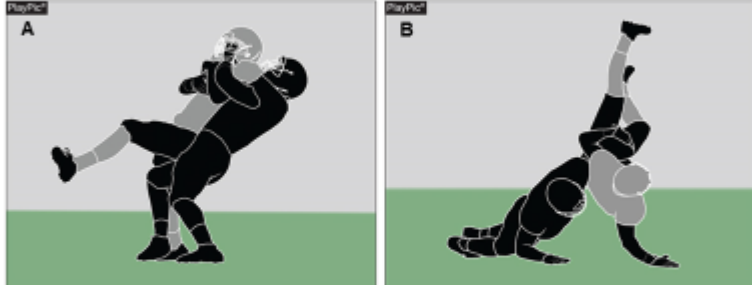

- A. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
 - B. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safe areas.
 - C. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - (i) Recognition. When thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a visible lightning strike, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for thirty minutes and take shelter immediately.
 - (ii) Thirty-Minute Rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least thirty minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - (iii) Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - D. Review annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel.
 - E. Inform student athletes of the lightning policy at start of season.
5. While **Jamborees** do not need approval from the OSAA, there are specific rules regarding the format of Jamborees in Football. You can find this information in the OSAA Handbook under the Participation Limitations section and on the OSAA website within the OSAA Football Plan at <http://www.osaa.org/activities/fbl>.
 6. **State Rule Interpreter Updates** will be distributed to all coaches beginning this year. These updates are provided to all officials each week and contain information regarding rule interpretations, enforcement procedures, and general comments on a variety of issues that occurred the week prior. Questions regarding the SRI Updates should be directed to Clark Sanders (OSAA Football State Rules Interpreter) at clark@oreofficials.org.
 7. **Any person (paid or volunteer)** who is located within the team box or press box and has the potential to provide instruction to players or coaches is required to meet the coaching certification requirements outlined in OSAA Rule 1.4. This includes individuals who are acting in any type of support role. This interpretation would exclude any individuals providing medical support during a contest.

2015 NFHS Football Rule Changes

1. A video containing a variety of clips providing illustrations of **unnecessary and excessive** fouls has been posted to the OSAA website for Coaches, Parents, and Players to review. Game officials have been required to watch the video in order to more clearly define the NFHS Football Rules Committee's expectations related to these types of fouls. You can view this video on the OSAA website at <http://www.osaa.org/activities/fbl/information/video>.

RULE CHANGE

Illegal Personal Contact Rule 9-4-3g



No player or nonplayer shall make any other contact with an opponent, including a defenseless player, which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness.

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Two significant additions to 9-4-3g should help all participants understand that while a block or tackle may be legal under the rules it can and should be a foul if that block or tackle is unnecessary and/or excessive.

The addition of the defenseless player into the rule points out that players who because of their focus of concentration and physical position are vulnerable to injury should not unnecessarily be involved in contact nor should the opponent take advantage of an opportunity to punish a player not aware of imminent contact – these are our most vulnerable participants.

Blindside blocks, peel-back blocks, and contact with an airborne receiver attempting to secure the ball are prime situations in which the type of excessive contact we are trying to address seems most common. Players are capable of generating tremendous amounts of force by launching and either dipping, drive, or thrusting the shoulder into an unknowing opponent.



The attempt to distinguish between the necessity of this type of block and whether or not it was needed for successful execution of the play is one that game officials will need to make.

Bottom line with 9-4-3g is, while it is OK to take a player out of the play – nothing allows you to take him out of the game.

2. Three key clarifications are included in the revised definition of spearing in 2-20-1c. Spearing may be committed by either an offensive or defensive player, the top portion of the helmet must be involved, and the contact must have occurred at the shoulders or below.

RULE CHANGE

Spearing Rule 2-20-1c




Number 61 is guilty of spearing because the crown (top portion) of their helmet was used to initiate contact against an opponent at the shoulders or below.

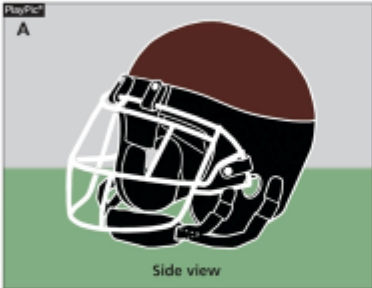

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RULE CHANGE

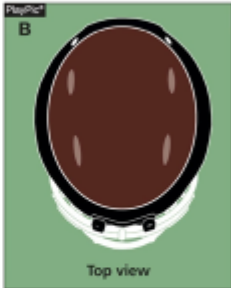
Spearing Rule 2-20-1c



NEWS PARTNER



Side view



Top view

Spearing is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent at the shoulders or below with the crown (top portion) of their helmet. The shaded area is the crown.

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Directives for 2015 Football

1. **2015 Blindside Block Experiment** – The OSAA will be participating with several other states in a NFHS Football rules experiment during the 2015 season. The experiment requires blockers to initiate contact on defenseless players with an “open hand” technique. Coaches should review the experiment documentation and training video prior to the start of the Association year. Experiment supporting materials are located at the links below:

- a. Experiment General Information – <http://www.osaa.org/activities/fbl>
- b. Experiment Training Video - <http://www.osaa.org/activities/fbl/information/video>

2. **Required Heads Up Football Certification.** Starting with the 2016 season OSAA rules will require that any football coach complete the USA Football Heads Up Certification prior to assuming coaching duties and to recertify annually through an online exam prior to the beginning of each Association year. Additionally, each member school sponsoring football is required to identify a Player Safety Coach. Each Player Safety Coach is required to attend an in person clinic annually prior to the start of the Association year that is conducted by a USA Football Master Trainer in preparation for implementing and overseeing the primary components of Heads Up Football at their school.

A complete list of future Player Safety Coach Training clinics will be published to the OSAA website and distributed to all schools in early December. If you are interested in hosting a future workshop please contact me via email (bradg@osaa.org) and I will forward you a list of host requirements that you can review.

You may visit <http://usafootball.com/headsup> to learn more about Heads Up Football or email your USA Football High School Regional Manager Bassel Faltas at bfaltas@usafootball.com or call him at (317) 489-4426.

3. **Coin Flip Mechanic** – The pre-game coin flip will be conducted 3-min prior to scheduled game time. A recommended timeline is listed below: (*Adjust as necessary for various start times*). Failure by a team to have captains present and ready for the coin flip 3-min prior to scheduled kickoff will result in an Unsportsmanlike penalty charged to the Head Coach.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 5:30pm - | Field open for pre-game warm-up |
| 6:30pm - | Officials should meet the head coaches to cover any issues before the game, give them a list of the officials for the game, cover any unusual plays, ensure all players are legally equipped, discuss halftime length, etc. The game clock should be set at 30 minutes. |
| 6:50pm - | National Anthem and teams should be introduced |
| 6:57 pm- | With 3-min on the game clock the field must be cleared, and no more than four team members in uniform meet with officials for the coin toss and sportsmanship message. |
| 7:00 pm- | Kickoff |

4. **Required Equipment** -For clarification, the following item is a directive rather than a suggestion. Please be advised:
- Officials choosing not to enforce the following interpretation are subject to individual and/or association sanctions including reduction or elimination of playoff games.
 - Coaches shall consider this a directive from the OSAA office and therefore are requested to work with the officials in accomplishing these tasks. Cooperation makes life better for all involved.

The OSAA is working pro-actively with coaches, athletic directors and officials to prevent and resolve illegal equipment issues before they surface. By rule, each player shall wear mandatory equipment prior to participating. A full description of mandatory equipment can be found in NFHS Rule 1-5. Coaches are required to verify their players are properly equipped and in accordance with the rules in the pre-game meeting. While football officials will observe players in their pre-game warm-ups and verbally notify the Head Coach of equipment violations, the onus for insuring that players are properly equipped has always belonged to the coaching staff. The provisions of NFHS Rule 1-5 were written with the safety of the player's as an indisputable goal. Knowing and practicing the provisions of NFHS Rule 1-5 will help us all achieve the OSAA's goal of preventing and resolving any issues before they surface.

Prior to the initial Ready-for-Play to start the game

All officials shall observe players in their pre-game warm-ups. If an official observes any equipment violations, including but not limited to an exposed knee, he shall verbally notify the Head Coach, and the player(s) shall not be allowed to participate in the subsequent game until correction has been made. **The Pre-Game is the only time verbal warnings shall be issued!**

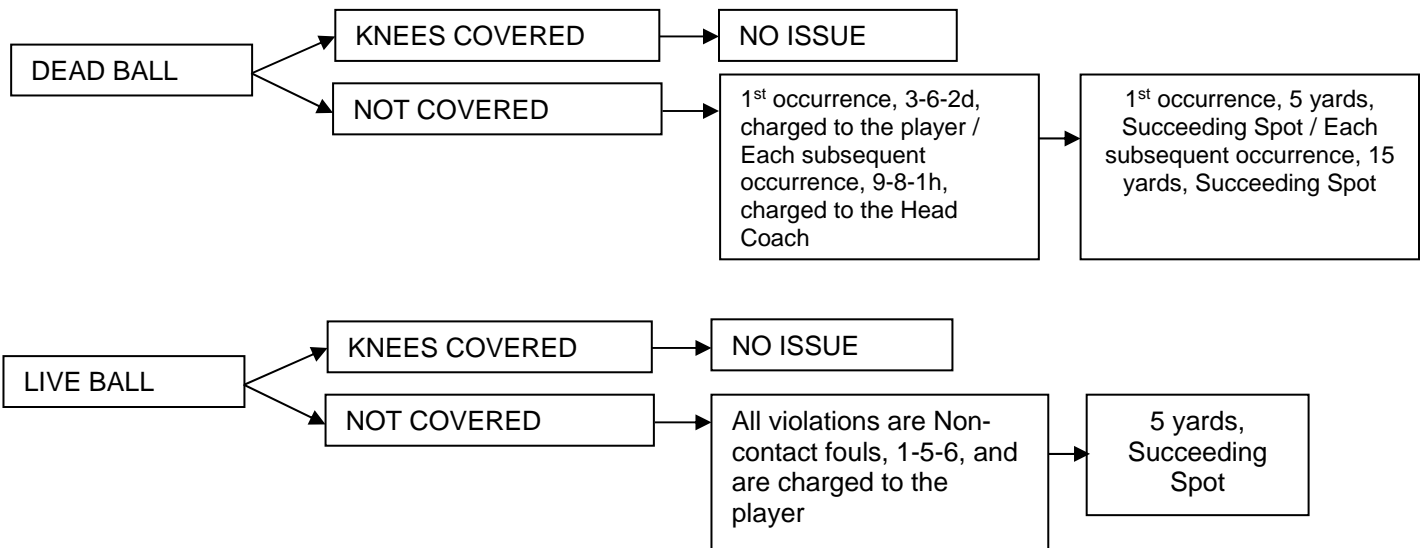
After the initial Ready-for-Play to start the game

Dead Ball Violations

- If a player's knees are **not continuously covered** when standing motionless, and this is the first occurrence of the game, the player is in violation of **Rule 3-6-2-d.** (*Failure to properly wear legal or required equipment when the ball is about to become live, 5-yards – S7-21-23*) The foul is charged to the offending player, the penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot, and the player shall not be allowed to participate until correction has been made.
- Subsequent** dead ball equipment violations shall be considered a violation of **Rule 9-8-1h** (*Failure of a head coach, following verification, to have his player(s) wear or use legal and/or required equipment, 15-yards – S27*) The Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul is charged to the Head Coach, the penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot, and the player shall not be allowed to participate until correction has been made.

Live Ball Violations

If, during live ball action, a player's knee **continuously becomes exposed**, the player is in violation of **Rule 1-5-6.** (*Each player shall wear the mandatory equipment while the ball is live, 5-yards - S27-23*). The foul is charged to the offending player, the penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot, and the player shall not be allowed to participate until correction has been made.



OSAA Medical Aspects of Sports Committee Statement on Football Helmets and Concussion Risk

The recognition and proper management of concussions in all sports continues to receive a great deal of attention. With this attention has come a focus on preventing these injuries. In football, much of the discussion about prevention in the media has centered upon the helmet. Despite limited evidence to support such beliefs, parents, athletes and even coaches place much faith in the ability of the helmet to prevent a concussion. **It is this committee's concern, and the concern of other medical experts, that the primary focus on the helmet to prevent concussion is misguided.** Though it sounds counter-intuitive, there is no evidence that helmets actually prevent concussions from occurring. It must be remembered that helmets were introduced to football decades ago to eliminate skull fractures, not concussions.

The heightened concern for concussion and the increasing variety of football helmets available has led parents and coaches to seek out the helmet that they believe will best protect a player from concussion. While a number of new football helmets have incorporated new materials and designs, there is no reliable evidence that any single brand or style of football helmet is protective against concussion. Based upon the current available medical evidence, **the OSAA MASC believes that no current football helmet brand or style offers superior protection from concussion in comparison to other helmets.**

The OSAA MASC endorses the proper fitting and maintenance of all NOCSAE-certified football helmets. Coaches should be trained in proper helmet fitting and helmets should be inspected regularly for proper inflation, cracks, or damage to the chinstrap and its attachments. The OSAA MASC believes that the most important step in preventing concussions in football is the elimination of helmet to helmet contact and strongly supports the enforcement of the current rules to limit the initiation of contact with the helmet and to eliminate helmet to helmet contact.

In 2009, 65% of all concussion in high school football resulted from helmet to helmet contact. Much like cervical spine injuries diminished greatly with the adoption of the rule banning spearing in the 1970's, we believe that a reduction in helmet to helmet contact will result in a reduced number of concussions in high school football. This principle must apply to practices, as well as games.