

GAME DAY CHECK-LIST (VARSITY AND JV GAMES)

While the NFHS rule book is very specific about proper field markings aimed at the safety and security of all participants, adjustments are sometimes required as long as the safety of participants is not affected. This communication is to remind team personnel of optimum standards on game day and suggestions that will facilitate a smooth operation of the game itself.

Prior notice is required if the start time is altered, half-time is adjusted or factors involving timing or playing rules are anticipated. Communicating such events as Homecoming, Senior Night or pre-game scripts to the BCFOA allocator as well as the referee, in advance is always appreciated.

Dressing facilities should be available for the officials. Obviously, early-starting games might force officials to arrive dressed, but schools can provide a post-game dressing area, free from the possible interaction/disruption from fans or team members. It is also incumbent on the game managers to ensure a safe withdrawal of officials from the playing field at halftime and especially game's end.

Most playing fields are adapted for a variety of sports, and may therefore be missing visible nine yard lines, hash marks, and occasionally, goal posts may be in an incorrect location.

Sidelines, goal lines, end lines and team box areas must be clearly marked. Designated team box areas extend from the 25-yard lines if teams are on opposite sides of the field and 20 to 45 if the sideline is shared. A line at least two (2) yards off the sideline should mark the team box area, and coaches are reminded that players should be kept further back, so as to avoid the normal game responsibilities of the sideline official(s) or the coaching staff.

Ideally a solid line should be visible every five (5) yards within the boundary. Goal posts MUST be padded.

Pylons should be in place on the goal lines and end lines, and of a material which is soft and flexible and does not create risk. Please avoid using hard cones which create a safety risk.

Pylons can also be used to give the umpire a reference point to help indicate the position of hash marks if there are none on the field or they are not in the correct position for high school football. These should be placed 2 yards beyond the end line at each end of the field and 53 feet, 4 inches from each sideline.

The playing field should be isolated from spectators, photographers and non-team personnel by having the field roped off. Spectators should be at least ten (10) yards away from the team box or sideline. If the field has a track and no stands the roped off area should permit spectators no closer than the track and include the end zones. If there is stand spectators should always be in the stands.

Special attention should be paid to small children, wheel chairs, strollers, lawn chairs, any other situations which increase risk factors/multiply the chance of injury or liability.

While the home team management is responsible for the safety and security, cooperation of everyone is appreciated. The officials will work to keep the environment free of risk, but the coaches/athletic directors must be willing to play an important role.

Auxiliary personnel are vital to the efficient and effective administration of the game. Care should be used when charging children with the responsibility as a member of the chain crew, timer or ball person.

The chain crew is asked to be present and available to receive instruction at least 20 minutes prior to game time. While three people is mandatory, it is permissible to have a fourth to set the clip.

High school football has contractual obligations concerning footballs. All the officials need are two regulation ones (currently BADEN), which should be presented to the umpire/back judge at least 20 minutes prior to game time.

The timer is directly responsible for operating the visible game clock. While maintaining score, down, distance, time outs remaining and any other scoreboard information makes the game more enjoyable for the spectators, it must not be at the expense of starting/stopping the clock. The timer should be available to meet with the referee no less than 20 minutes prior to game time.

When a visible clock is used game administrators are also advised to have an effective means of communication between the timer and game officials to resolve any timing issue, or make any adjustment to the accuracy of scoreboard information, and inform the referee of that process prior to the start of the game.

The importance for ball people, to run in a new football at appropriate times, should be obvious. All coaches would prefer that the officials concentrate on players during dead ball periods rather than chase the football. Having two (2) ball people will facilitate this important task and help to guarantee smoother management of the game.

Provincial guidelines set minimum standards for the treatment of injuries or possible concussion-like symptoms. However, trainers and/or medical personnel must be waved onto the field by the referee, after a quick determination that there is sufficient reason.

Statisticians and ball people are allowed outside the team box. Coaches, doctor, masseur, body guards or other support personnel are not. Head coaches are reminded that responsibility for the conduct of any sideline person remains theirs alone.

Sideline conversations should be limited to between the head coach or his designate if not on the sideline and the “get back” coach and game officials.

Good officials will allow the coach to make decisions on acceptance of penalties, take control of situations or players as the need arises, and enforce sideline management fouls only when cooperation is not forthcoming.

Good coaches will allow the administration of the game/administration of the penalty to conclude before demanding information or demonstrating displeasure.

Coaches are reminded that after asking for a timeout they will be required to delay their entry onto the field until the officials have concluded any tasks such as administering penalties, measuring, allowing trainers to deal with injuries, and the like. The clock will be stopped during this time.

Coaches are encouraged to understand all parameters surrounding coach-referee conference(s) and the ejection/disqualification of a player or coach.

Thank you for your team’s attention to this important communication.