

MHSAA OFFICIALS BULLETIN



Equipment Reminder

It is not nit-picking to require players to wear required equipment...properly. If a player does not have his knee pads completely covering his knees, and his pants completely covering the knee pad, he should be instructed to make the proper adjustments. If this can be done quickly without delaying the next play, he can do so and remain in the game.

If this continues to be a problem, the player should be removed from the game until it can be corrected. It may be suggested to the coach that the pads and pants be taped in order to be held in place. Do not ignore uncovered knees. Address it early and for both teams.

Illegal Low Blocks POE

A point of emphasis this year is seeing and calling illegal low blocks. Especially in light of concerns for improperly worn knee pads noted above, illegal low blocks (*i.e.*, *illegal blocks below the waist, clips and chop blocks*) should be flagged every time.

The majority of missed illegal blocks we're seeing on film are blocks below the waist on kicks and by the defense. Often, the kick return team will cut a "flyer" on his way down the field, or a defensive back will cut a pulling lineman on a sweep or end-around. It is important that both teams are being held to the same standards to ensure that safety is a primary concern.

"No-Touch Ball Handling Mechanics"

No-touch mechanics remain the option of each crew. We do ask that if you will be utilizing this option, you inform each coach of what is expected of the players during the pregame conference.

Some observations:

- 1) Be consistent early. In the early plays of each team's first series, players are tempted to leave the ball where they're downed, or

attempt to toss it to the covering official. If officials chase down the ball, pick it up to relay or catch it when it is tossed in their directions, the players will continue to do the same. Allow the ball to remain where it is and instruct the nearest offensive player to retrieve it, and both teams will quickly become compliant in their requirements.

- 2) We have noticed very little delay in the progress of the game when no-touch mechanics are utilized. The only area we think could be improved is when coming out of an intermission. Because the ball is not in place, some referees are not sounding the ready-for-play until the offensive team brings the ball to the line of scrimmage. Using these mechanics in this particular situation, the ball is not necessary in order for the ready-for-play to be sounded. Referees should use the ready-for-play to encourage players to come out of their huddles in a timely manner.
- 3) Maybe the best thing to come out of the no-touch mechanics is the attention teams have given who handles the footballs on the sideline. We have seen a large increase in the number of teams using adults for this task. These folks seem to be more attentive and aware of when and where a new ball is needed.
- 4) While this mechanic is optional for the regular season, **it will become mandatory for use in the postseason**. If your crew intends on officiating postseason games, it is suggested that you begin familiarizing yourselves to prepare for these new postseason requirements.

FB Manual

As previously mentioned, the [Football Officials Manual](#) has been updated, and MHSAA officials are expected to implement this year's changes over the coming weeks in preparation for postseason play.

Rules Review: A tight end (A89), positioned next to tackle (A65), has one foot inside the free-blocking zone and the rest of his body outside. At the snap, A89 cut blocks B70, who is directly in front of A65. Ruling?

Ruling: This is a legal play. In order for A89 to be considered in the free blocking zone, he needs only any portion of his body in the zone. At the snap, he blocks B70 below the waist. Since B70 is across from A65, this block is likely from the side. Blocks below the waist at the front or side are legal as long both involved in the block are in the free blocking zone at the snap AND the block occurs within the FBZ immediately at the snap.