

APRIL FOOLS RULES?

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Only 1 week into the season, I thought I would share some play situations or rule questions where individuals have sought clarification. As my fellow rule interpreter, I have highlighted the situation and invite your answer below. You can decide for yourself if the coach was doing an April fool joke.

1. Can you face off with the wing position closest to the bench unoccupied?

While the short answer is “yes,” look how involved this simple question can be...

Under Rule 4, Section 4, Art 3 (p. 35), If a team is down a man, they can no longer bring someone upon the wing for a faceoff, so they COULD elect to leave the wing near the bench open. Rule does not prohibit the "bench" wing to be the one left vacant.

As per above rule, they must have 4 in defensive area and three in offensive area and in this instance, we did NOT issue any penalty for delay of game - they simply face off without their full complement. However, under Rule 2, Section 1, Art 3 (p. 22), we cannot continue a game with fewer than 7 players on a team.

However, just the other day, I was reviewing our alternatives under the faceoff provision and found that an official would be within their right to issue an "illegal procedure penalty (delay of game) under **Rule 6, Section 5, Art 2, f3 (p. 71),** heading entitled, "**Delaying the game,**" states the following:

a.) **It would be illegal procedure if** "After a goal is scored, 20 seconds to begin when the official at the center line has possession of the ball (I still show the ball to my fellow official as a sign to start his timer), but today we are instructed to place the ball on the ground at the faceoff spot.

b.) **It would also be illegal procedure upon** “**Any player not in his restraining area** at the time the whistle is blown to start play at the time of the faceoff." I have always construed this to mean, behind his restraining line (whether on offense or defense), but I can see how an official could construe the wing line to constitute a restraining area, since player is restricted to line up somewhere BEHIND the 20 yard wing line - how is this any different than the offensive or defensive restraining line?

Based on the above two rule stipulations above, it would be my interpretation that if a team has a full complement of players with players in the penalty box, that if that full complement has not occupied at the restricted areas, including the wing lines, we administer a technical foul,

award the ball to the team offended and start play (not waiting for the team to supply the missing player. With the exception of the beginning of the game, which under Rule 2,1.1 (p.22), a team which cannot field enough player due to injuries or ejection, may continue to play provided a.) there are no fewer than 7 and b.) offsides restrictions with 4 on defense and 3 on offense are adhered to as per rule(s) 4.4, Section 4, Articles 1 + 3 (p. 35)

Also, there are two NOTES which address delay (pp. 50,51) NOTE: Any delay f game is to be strictly enforced, See Rule 6-5-2f for method of enforcement.

By the way, any time a substitution is legal, any substitution delay would first be a "silent play-on" (Rule 4.21 SITUATION (p.51), followed by a technical, "illegal procedure" call, if said delay results in advantage.

2. What if there is no working horn at the table? Can the table communicate with the clock operator, who can then sound the horn from the scoreboard?

Answer: I would take whatever horn they could supply.

Actually, Rule 1, section 12 (p. 22) indicates a technical foul for failure t provide a scorebook, a timing device, a table and a working horn hand-held or as part of the scoreboard). Failure to supply any of these items is penalized by illegal procedure.

3. Our county just got three new turf field. They actually worked the center dot in but didn't make any effort to the centerline.

Rule 1 Section 2 "Notes1. If the field of play has a logo in the center or at any other part of the field of play, that logo should not obstruct the visibility of the required marks. A solid or shadow-bordered line is permissible. A shadow line is a line that designates the continuation of the required line by use of a border or outlines, at least 1/4 - inch wide."

"PENALTY: Failure to have a clearly marked center line that runs the entire width of the field is illegal procedure assessed against the home team."

Anecdotal: I have seen anywhere from baby powder to white athletic tape through the logo. What I have observed already this season is the lack of a center square or circle to mark the spot of the faceoff. I just let that go. I also suggest officials report those fields which are not in compliance, so the assigner can contact the school's AD with the hope of correcting it. We hate to start games on a negative note.

4. Coach insisted for a stick exchange to be legal, it had to be left on the ground in the substitution box for the player to retrieve.

Answer: There are 3 areas of the rule book which address a stick exchange:

1.) The **stick can NOT be thrown** to any player: Under rule 6.5.Art 2b (p. 70), it is "illegal procedure" for throwing a cross other than at a ball, other player or game personnel, (in which case this is unsportsmanlike).

2.) **The player may exchange his stick anywhere along his own team bench area:** Under rule 6.5.2 SITUATION I (p. 73) the player is permitted to exchange his stick anywhere. In that situation, the timekeeper sounds a horn for what they think is an illegal exchange along his team bench area and the ruling states, "The horn should not sound as this is a legal exchange." (This year, the timekeeper is no longer even authorized to blow the horn with the exception of early entry or coach's request for count of crosses, in which case it is a double horn at the next dead ball).

3.) **The player may exchange his cross anywhere along the 20-yard substitution area.** Under rule 6.6, Art 3b "Conduct Foul," (p. 75), "A coach or player may leave the bench/coaches area and enter the table area only (1) to exchange a cross with a player on the field in the opposite end of the field from that team's bench area during a live ball or dead ball;" I did not like this rule 3 years ago when the area for a stick exchange was extended to include on the opponent's side of the substitution box, but that is the rule.

5. Here's a question about where the goalie can be. Man-down team sent out 4 poles, two shorties and moved their goalie to attack. The rule just says a properly equipped goalie must be on the field. I also pointed out that no other player can be in the crease stopping shots.

We had Great man down and time out was called, and the team came out with 6 men on defense 4 poles and 2 short sticks, no goalie. The goalie was on attack. Is this legal to not have your goalie in on the defense side and on attack. Or is it similar to like pulling a goalie in hockey.

Answer: Not only have I never seen it, but I am also wondering why you would leave the net open, unless you are trying to get in your opponent's head. Unless a shot has already been released,

under rule 4.18.4 (p. 46) first offense is only a technical for a conduct foul, while 2nd is a releasable UNS.

As a side note, it would be interesting if the official chose to do an equipment check on this goalie/attackman – bet coach would never put him on offense again...But then again do we even know what dimensions are allowable for a goalie's stick? (Just in case next time he wants to check it, look for 10-12 inches in width, 16 1/2 inches longitudinal head from outside top to beginning of throat w/ minimum 40-inch stick).

Remember, under Rule 5.5. (p. 60),” illegal crosse”, all stick penalties are 2 minutes, full time, non-releasable and can be corrected, so you can simply return to player.

IF THE US LAX SCORECARD DON'T FIT, IT'S NOT LEGIT!

Thanks for reading.

Jim Bateman, MD State Rules Interpreter

P.S. None of these are April fools - they are all true to lax-life this season!

