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To: Supervisors of Athletics, Football Sport Officials, Football Coaches

Date: September 2, 2022

Subject: Clarification on State Adoption for Football Coaches/Team Box Area

The purpose of this memo is to provide clarification related to the state association adoption of Rule 1-2-3g regarding Team Boxes. The state association adoption was recommended by the MPSSAA Football Committee and ratified by the MPSSAA Board of Control with the approval of the Fall Football Bulletin. This guidance shall be observed by both coaches and officials.

NFHS Rule 1-2-3g. – Team boxes shall be marked on each side of the field outside the coaches’ area between the 25-yard lines for use of coaches, substitutes, athletic trainers, etc., affiliated with the team. The coaches’ area is a minimum of a 2-yard belt between the front of the team box and the sideline, and becomes a restricted area when the ball is live.

NOTE: It is permissible for state associations to approve an extension of the team box and to determine the individuals who may be in the extended area, provided such extension is the same for both teams.

MPSSAA Fall Bulletin - By State adoption, Maryland has adopted the following rule regarding the use of the coaches box. The coaches box is extended for coaches only to the 10-yard line.

NOTE: By coaches box, the MPSSAA is referring to the coaches authorized area within the team box. The extension of the team box is for coaches only.

Guidance and Interpretation: The intent of the state adoption was to provide coaching flexibility related to timeouts, down and distance, and for better communication with officials. The intent of the state adoption was not to provide opportunities to challenge official’s decision or discretionary calls.

Coaches and Officials are advised that:

- NFHS Rule 9-8 - Noncontact unsportsmanlike conduct by nonplayers – will be enforced. This includes the use of the restricted area by three coaches, which must be cleared when the ball is live.

- The team box for participants has not been extended. Per NFHS Rule 9-8 – Noncontact unsportsmanlike conduct by nonplayers - A nonplayer shall not be outside the team box unless to become a player or to return as a replaced player.
- The intent of the rule is to create better game management and positive communication between coach and officials. Coaches may not act in any manner that does not reflect the values of the school, school system, or MPSSAA and must continue to operate in the extended area in the same manner that is allowed in the traditional team box area.
- The intent of the rule is to create better game management and positive communication between coach and officials. “Preventative officiating” techniques are recommended to ensure official and coach understanding.
- The extension only allows coaches to operate in the extended area in the same manner that is allowed in the traditional team box area. The same application of rule for coaches and officials should apply whether it is the 10-yard line or 50-yard line.

