

Hello all. We have just completed week 7 of the season. I would like to take a few minutes of your time to cover a few things that I have been asked about.

- Bands/music being played during the game. I have been asked about this by both officials and coaches/administrators. The NFHS has no rule regarding officials stopping this. I do know that other states have implemented procedures/rulings on this, but Maryland has not. It is something that I will bring during the off season with the football committee and the MPSSAA.
- Mercy/Overtime – The mercy rule is not implemented until the second half. Once the 35-point differential is reached the clock will only stop in four instances. They are listed below. The Mercy rule will continue to be in effect for the state tournament.
 - a) A player is injured or apparently injured.
 - b) A charged (team) time out.
 - c) A score that reduces the point differential gets to less than 35 points.
 - d) The end of the period.

Be reminded that Rule 3-1-1 allows a period or periods may be shortened by emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement, any remaining period may be shortened at any time, or the game terminated.

The MPSSAA overtime procedures can be found on the MPSSAA website under the officials/MPSSAA Football Interpreter Zone.

I have received several calls/emails regarding uniforms. Specifically pants and knee coverage. I hear you. I hear them. We are not fans of being the “fashion police”. We know the players want to emulate what they see at the highest levels. However, the rule is the rule. In short, knee pads are to be worn over the knee and under the pants. If a player fails to meet this requirement, they are to be sent off the field. Be reminded that if the knees become uncovered during play, they may remain in the game. Let’s also continue to remind coaches and players about the ruling on face paint.

Ejections:

As we approach the tournament, ejections become even more as it could prevent a player from

participating in the next game. I have received calls and emails regarding ejections. The issues are whether an ejection was warranted or if an ejection can be overturned. We are not in the business of overturning ejections so that a player can participate in the next game. You make the call on the field based on what you have at that moment. I support your decision. Additionally, the next game suspension is not an MPSSAA rule during the regular season but a school district rule. If we are presented with a situation where a team felt the ejection was unjust, I may review it. If I feel it was incorrect (Example, wrong player ejected for fighting) I will advise. It would then be up to the school district to determine if the player can participate in the next contest. Once the tournament begins, in addition to your regular report the ejection must be reported to the MPSSAA. If a player is ejected during the state tournament, that player will, without question, sit out the next contest. The ejection report can be found under the Officials tab on the MPSSAA website.

There seems to be some confusion on the enforcement of an ineligible player downfield under rule 7-5-2 Exception 2. Difference between NFHS and NCAA.

The question is, under this rule can there still be a foul for an ineligible player downfield? The answer is yes. If all the requirements are met for a player to intentionally ground a pass, it is considered a legal forward pass. Thus, there still could be a foul for an ineligible player downfield. If the requirements are not met, i.e., the passer is beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone, but the pass does not reach the neutral zone, there cannot be a foul for ineligible downfield as this is not a legal pass.

Just a few words on a Point of Emphasis:

Targeting/Defenseless Player. We only need to reference Rule 2 and 9 to determine if we have a Targeting/Hit on a defenseless player foul. Determining if a foul is flagrant is in the judgement of the official. Again, we will stand by your call.

Lastly, let's continue to stress sportsmanship amongst the coaches and players. Homecoming and rivalry games are coming up. Things can get a little "chippy" during this time.

Let's finish up the regular season strong and good luck. I look forward to seeing you during the tournament.

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