

James Byrd
MPSSAA
Football Rules Interpreter.

Hello all. We have just completed week 7 of the season and the playoffs are quickly approaching. Before I go into a few reminders and updates I want to say that unfortunately some officials have suffered some in game injuries. Some of these injuries have ended the season for some and others unfortunately ended careers. I want to thank you for the time and dedication that you have given to your association, the schools you service and the MPSSAA. I wish you all a speedy recovery and hope to see you on the field again. I have received very little feedback on games issues which tell me that you all are doing great job. One of the most important thing is game management and it appears we are doing very well with that.

One of the things that I along with the MPSSAA deals with during the season is questions about ejections. I nor the MPSSAA will overturn an ejection. This is the current MPSSAA Policy:

During the regular season, a player disqualified under National Federation (NF) Rule 12-8-2 is only disqualified for the remainder of that game. Any subsequent suspension is based on the policy of the individual school district. Starting with the first region contest and continuing throughout the tournament, a player who is disqualified under NFHS Rule 12-8 (Article 2, 3) shall be barred from participating in the team's next game. For interpretation refer to Misconduct Detrimental to a Tournament, see Rule .07C (11) in the MPSSAA Handbook.

With that said, if we must eject a player or coach let's make sure, we are 100% sure of our decision. All ejections must be reported to the MPSSAA. You can find the form on the MPSSAA website under the Officials tab at the very bottom or via the following link,

<https://www.mpssaa.org/officials/mpssaa-officials-ejection-reporting-form/>. The form must be submitted within 24 hours of the ejection.

Mercy/Overtime – The mercy rule is not implemented until the 2nd 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.

Just a few words on some issues/questions that have come up this season.

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.

After viewing game footage, I have noticed that we are missing a lot of blocks in the back and blindside blocks on kicking plays. Please reference your association's kicking mechanics so that we get these fouls.

Penalty enforcement. There was a time when we wanted to resume the game as soon as possible after a penalty. However, this has resulted in some "mistakes". We must operate under the **"Get The Call Right"** theory. So, if you need to take a little more time to talk yourselves through this please do.

Formations. Let's make sure we communicate with each other be it verbal or non-verbal. One example is the LOS. How many players are in the backfield. I have received footage of us missing illegal formations (5 players in the backfield).

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.