



ATHLETIC OFFICIALS SERVICE

Flag Football State Series Preparation

September 28, 2026

Hoffman Estates High School



Meeting Agenda



- Introductions / Announcements
- Season in Review
 - Assignor feedback
 - IHSA feedback received
 - Common coach's gripes
 - Consistency of Legal / Illegal screen blocks
 - Holding
 - Offensive / Defensive Contact
 - QB protection





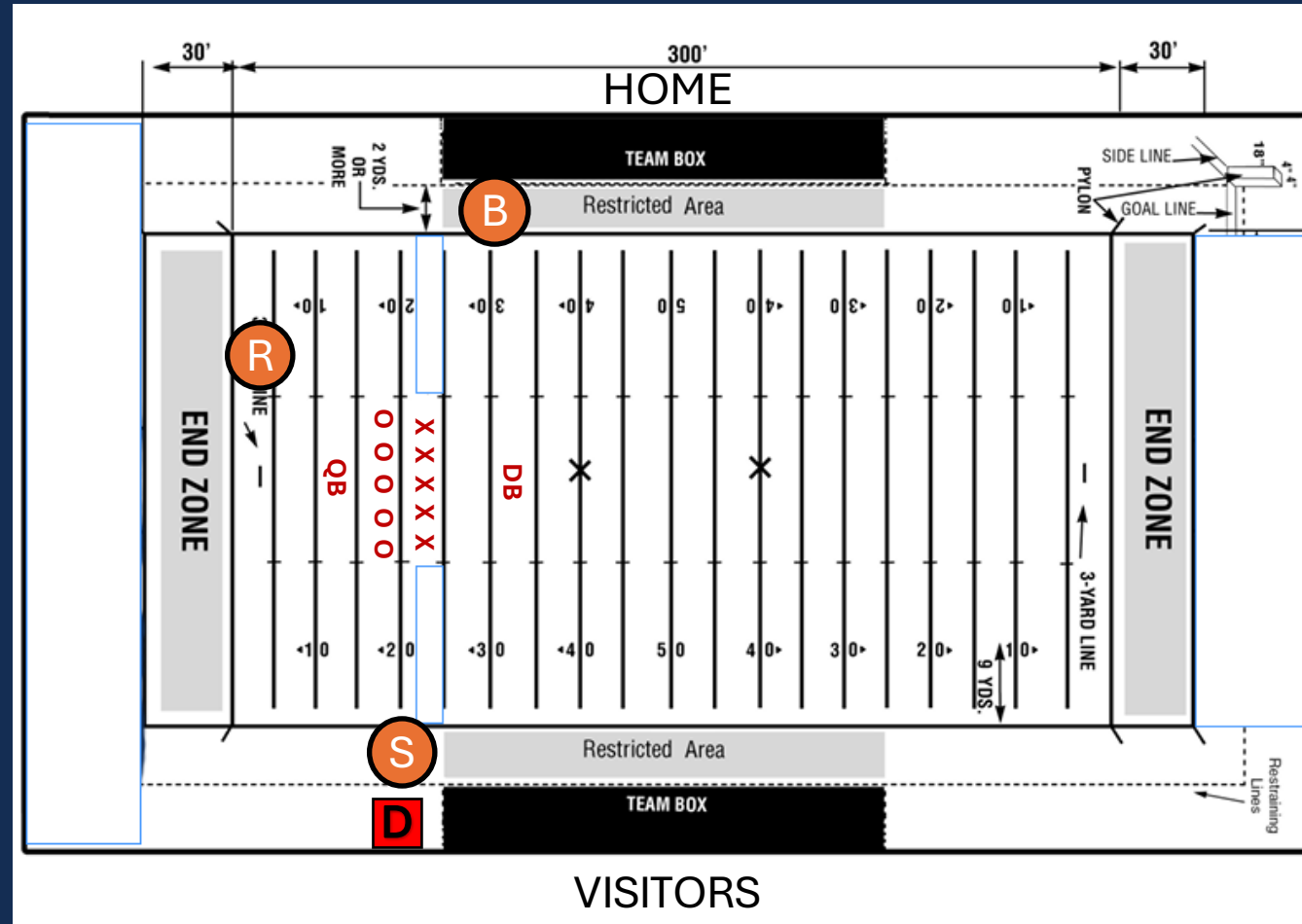
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Mechanics / Coverages / Keys

State Series Playoff Preparation



Three-Person Mechanics



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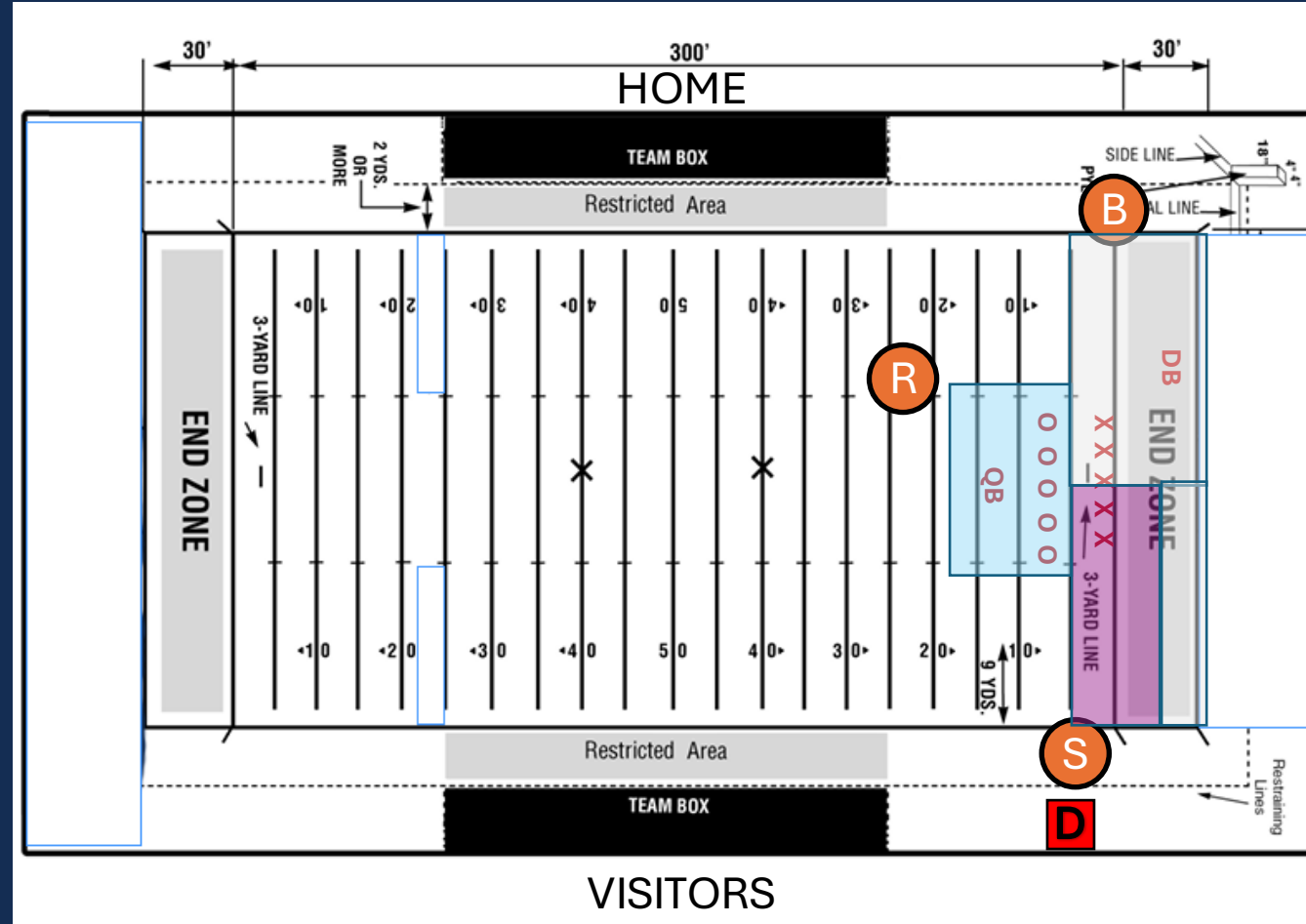
Third / Fourth Down (3)



- **Referee** – Normal scrimmage play
- **Side Judge** - Pre-snap position and keys remain the same as a normal play. Stay home to rule on pass beyond LOS. Follow play and move quickly to LTG. Hold there to rule of 1st down or forward progress short. Travel as the runner travels beyond the LTG to dead ball
- **Back Judge** – Read Run/Pass. If Run, same as FJ. If pass for LTG, normal pass coverage. If within 10 yards of LTG, start there



Three-Person Goal Coverage Areas



Three-Person Goal Line / Try



- **Referee** – Normal scrimmage play
- **Side Judge** - Pre-snap position and keys remain the same as a normal play. If the ball is snapped 10 yards or less from the goal line, move quickly to GL. Hold there to rule if ball breaks plane of Goal Line
- **Back Judge** – Just prior to snap, move to Goal Line. Read Run/Pass. If Run, stay and rule on goal line. If pass, end line primary, rule on catch ball status. Work back if your side goal line is challenged



Three-Person Scrimmage Kicks



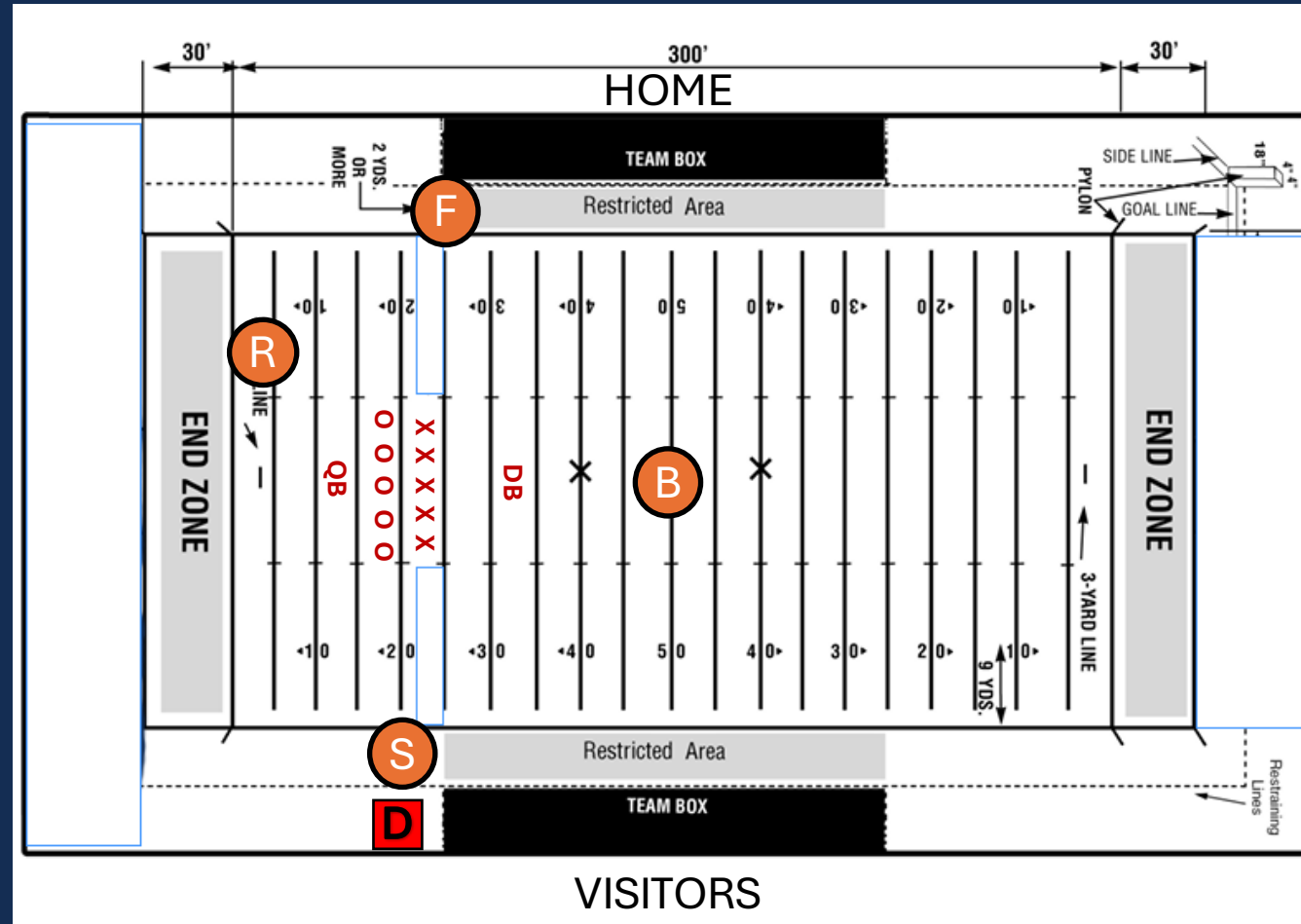
Scrimmage Kicks



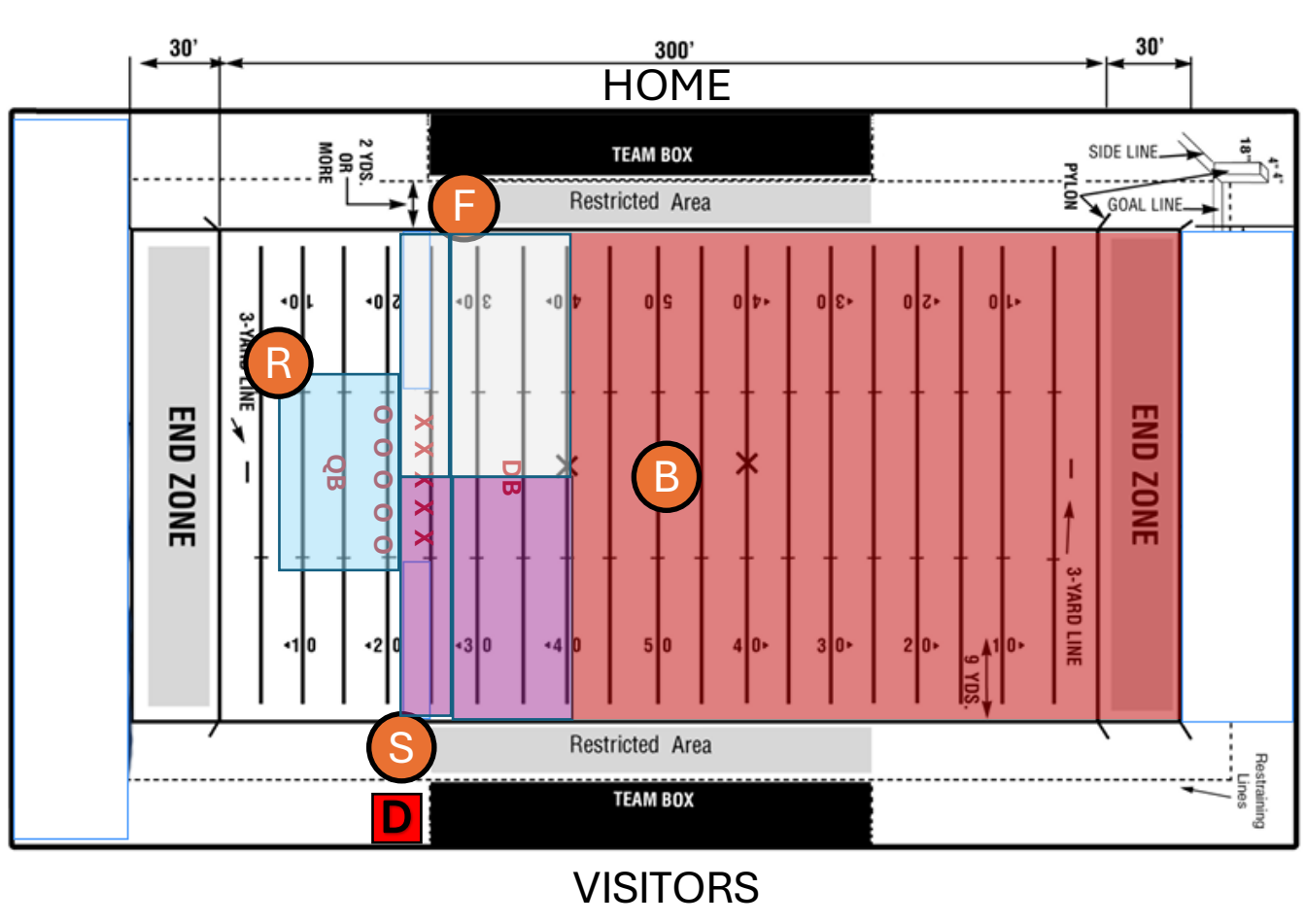
- **Referee** – Do not signal RFP until R is set. Give them a reasonable amount of time to sub.
 - No movement
 - After snap, five second visible hand count
- **Side Judge** – Focus on contact and illegal screens
- **Back Judge** – Primary responsibility is the receiver
 - Be ready to rule on muff / fumble / end of play



Four-Person Mechanics



Four-Person Coverage Areas





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Get Ready !

State Series Playoff Preparation



State Series Preparation



- Prior to Game Day
 - Re-read the federation rule book
 - Go through and study the case plays
 - Study the IHSA Resources: <https://www.ihsa.org/sports/girls-flag-football/resources>

Additional Resources		8
 2026 IHSA State Association Adoptions	Updated 07/20/26	
 2026 NFHS Rule Changes and IHSA State Adoption Changes	Updated 07/20/26	
 Anticipated Entries 2026-27	Updated 07/15/26	
 Legal Flags & Allowable Uniforms through 2029	Updated 09/11/26	
 NFHS Flag Football Rules Book	Updated 07/08/26	
 NFHS General Game Clock Procedures - Pressbox Sheet	Updated 07/20/26	
 Penalty Chart 2026	Updated 07/22/26	
 Pre-Game Medical Huddle	Updated 08/03/26	



Terms & Conditions



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2026-27 Girls Flag Football



Girls Flag Football Terms and Conditions

2026-27 Girls Flag Football State Series Terms and Conditions

In accordance with Section 1.450 of the IHSA Constitution, the Board of Directors has approved the Terms and Conditions governing the 2026-27 IHSA Girls Flag Football Tournament Series.

I. School Classification

Competition in the IHSA Girls Flag Football Tournament Series will be held for all member schools without classification.

II. DATES AND SITES

If a school withdraws after the seeding meeting date/*List of Participants* due date and/or does not show up for competition, the school will be charged a \$500 penalty, and if applicable, the cost of game officials and the host school guarantee provided for in the Terms & Conditions as a result of such breach.

E) Eligibility: All member schools in good standing may enter one team under the provisions of IHSA By-law 3.054.

F) Affirmative Action: Only girls shall be permitted to participate in this state series except as provided in the IHSA Affirmative Action Policy.

IV. HOST FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

A) All Quarterfinal Regional games are financially independent from the IHSA. All local expenses will be paid by the host school. If admission is charged, the host school will receive 100 percent of the



Terms & Conditions



- Officials Payments
 - Regionals - \$70
 - Sectionals - \$80
 - State Final - \$90
 - All games paid by the IHSA through Arbiter Pay
- Girls Flag Footballs:
 - The host school shall supply a top-quality Wilson leather or composition covered ball, Sized TDY. There can be no substitution of a ball manufactured by another company during regionals, sectionals and the state final.
 - Regional Sites: Each school hosting regional games will be supplied with three game balls
 - Sectional Sites: Each school hosting the semifinals and championship game will be supplied with three game balls



State Series Preparation



- Prior to Game Day
 - The Referee should contact the host school and confirm your assignment (3 days)
 - Talk with your partners. If you were assigned the Referee position and you are not comfortable working there, then discuss with your crew mates. Work it out and determine the best positions for each official
 - Radios? If you are going to use Radios, find out if your crew mates are familiar with them and if they have the equipment. If not, can you come up with enough radios and headsets for the crew? All or none
 - Uniforms - NO SHORTS. Determine if you will be wearing Short or Long Sleeve Jerseys. Bring both. Crew must be dressed the same



State Series Preparation



- Game Day
 - Arrive 45 minutes prior to first game start
 - Pre-game all aspects of the game including coverage areas, penalty administration, etc.
 - Look sharp
 - Enter the field together
 - Walk the field
 - Inspect Pylons & Yard Line Markers
 - Importance of focused coaches pregame meeting
 - Be businesslike and cordial with the coaches
 - All members of the officiating crew should be present at the coach's meetings
 - Present game card (Example on next Slide)



State Series Preparation



2026 IHSA FLAG FOOTBALL

Team 1 vs. Team 2
Day, Month XX, 2026

Officiating Crew

Referee: First Last (12345)
Side Judge: First Last (12345)
Field Judge: First Last (12345)



2026 IHSA FLAG FOOTBALL

Team 1 vs. Team 2
Day, Month XX, 2026

HUDL INFORMATION

School: Suburban Officials
Team: Varsity Football

Dave Lopshire will be requesting a one-way video exchange. Please include ODK and Down/Distance as well as all camera angles.

Thanks for helping our officiating community
improve our on field performance!



State Series Preparation



- Questions for Head Coaches
 - Is your team legally & properly equipped by NFHS & IHSA Rules?
 - Do you have any questions, comments on rules or situations?
 - Do you have any special plays of which we should be aware?
 - We will be using the game balls provided by the IHSA for today's game. Does that work for you? *(If not, ask why, then inspect the ball they want to use. It must meet the guidelines in the Terms & Conditions)*
 - Do you have any players with wraps or casts I need to inspect?
 - Did you bring a trainer? If not, are you good with the decisions made by the training staff provided?
 - Who else beside you can call a time out?
 - Play clock procedure
 - Sideline procedure



State Series Preparation



- Game Day
 - Referee
 - Verifies Game Balls
 - A Wilson leather or composition ball is required
 - Three balls provided to each Site – Inspect all 3
 - 10-13 psi (by rule) If it's flat or you can easily squeeze it, not usable
 - Uniforms & Flags
 - Visiting Team wears white
 - All Flag colors must clearly contrast with the uniform shorts
 - Side Judge finds the box and box operator
 - Instruct on specifics of the line of scrimmage and to hold until moved by you
 - Back Judge meets clock operator and instructs them on specifics of clock operation
 - Provide timing sheet and game card to press box



State Series Preparation



Click to Open



2026- NFHS Flag Football General Game Clock Procedures

1. The Game length will be 4 – 12 minute periods with a running clock.

The clock will only be stopped during play in the 1st, 2nd 3rd and 4th period.

- A charged team timeout
- An official's timeout ex. injury (restart based on Referee signal)
- A touchdown (the clock will NOT run on the extra point attempt and will be started again at the change of possession snap)
- Change of possession (restart on the snap)
- Following a safety (restart on the snap)
- Penalties (restart based on referee signal)

ADDITIONAL CLOCK STOPPAGES FOR THE FINAL 2 MINUTES in the SECOND AND FOURTH PERIOD

- A charged team timeout
- An official's timeout ex. injury (restart based on Referee signal)
- A touchdown (the clock will NOT run on the extra point attempt and will be started again at the change of possession snap)
- Change of possession (restart on the snap)
- Following a safety (restart on the snap)
- Penalties (restart based on referee signal)



State Series Preparation



- Coin Toss

- No more than four Captains for each team
- Center of field, Referee faces the game clock
- R introduces the crew, gives instructions and administers the coin toss
- Remind the captains their team members must be properly equipped
- Remind the captains that their team is responsible for the football while on offense and the sooner they get it to the referee, the more football we play
- Remind everyone IT'S ALL ABOUT SPORTSMASHIP
- Show your coin and point out heads & tails to the speaking captains
- Instruct the visiting team to call the toss. The call will be made before the toss
- Referee will instruct the team winning the toss they will have the choice of offense or defense to start the first-half; choose the goal they wish to defend; or they can defer their choice to the second half (Defer is immediately signaled to the press box)
- Referee will instruct the other team they have the choice of the remaining option
- After the coin toss the Referee will face the press box and indicate which team will take possession of the ball and at which end of the field



State Series Preparation



- Clock Management

- **Two-Minute Notification** - The clock will stop for the 2 -minute notification in the Second and Fourth period
 - The clock starts on the snap after the 2-minute notification
 - There is no two-minute notification in the first and third period
- **Additional Clock Stops** for the final 2-minutes in the second and fourth quarter
 - Out of Bounds (restarted on the snap)
 - Dead balls (including incomplete passes and inadvertent whistles) (restart on the snap)
 - Incomplete pass (restart on the snap)
 - First down (restart based on the referee signal)



State Series Preparation



- Game Management
 - Enforce Team box
 - Maintain focus and concentration
 - Communicate regularly
 - Down.... Distance..... Next Line-to-gain
 - Alert fellow refs of developing concerns
 - Developing key situations
 - Time outs remaining
 - Excel at being in good positioning spots
 - After each dead ball, verify flag positions are correct



State Series Preparation



- Dead ball Spots are critical (often winning and losing determined by field position)
 - Wing official try see how Ball is being handled in regards to line to gain
- Penalty Enforcement
 - Use “Make it be there” philosophy
 - Don’t rush enforcement....discus with fellow officials
 - Explain penalties to coaches



State Series Preparation



- Fouls

- Flag down for foul
 - Stop the clock immediately on pre-snap foul
 - Stop the clock on play completion on a live-ball foul
- Spot the ball at the end of the play
- Do not pick up or move a flag until it has been enforced
- Make certain that the down indicator/line of scrimmage box does not move until the penalty has been enforced
- The official calling the foul will relay information regarding the result of the play and the foul to the Referee
- The Referee will relay the result of the play and the penalty to the offended team coach to accept or decline the penalty
- The Referee will relay penalty enforcement information to the non-calling official for enforcement of the penalty
- The non-calling official will enforce the penalty by moving the ball and line of scrimmage to the appropriate location on the field



State Series Preparation



- Fouls

- The Referee will face the press box and relay the penalty and the appropriate enforcement. Use the team designation, player number and proper signal for the penalty
- All officials will confirm the down and the line to gain before the ball is made ready for play and the whistle is blown to start the play clock
- If under 2:00 minutes in the half, all officials will confirm if the clock will start on the ready for play or the snap of the ball



State Series Preparation



- End of Game
 - LEAVE
 - DO NOT PASS GO
 - DO NOT COLLECT
 - DO NOT SHAKE HANDS
 - DO NOT HESITATE
 - GO
 - I MEAN NOW





RULE 4 - Ball in Play, Dead Ball and Out of Bounds

4.2.2 A Play a SITUATION

4.2.2 SITUATION A1: A's ball, first and 10, on A's 30-yard line. A1 gains possession of the ball prior to A1's flag inadvertently falling to the ground, then A1 runs for a touchdown untouched



What's the ruling?





RULE 4 - Ball in Play, Dead Ball and Out of Bounds

4.2.2 A Play a SITUATION

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RULING

Touchdown





RULE 4 - Ball in Play, Dead Ball and Out of Bounds

4.2.2 A Play b

SITUATION

4.2.2 SITUATION A1: A's ball, first and 10, on A's 30-yard line. A1 gains possession of the ball prior to A1's flag inadvertently falling to the ground, then B22 touches A1 at A's 35-yard line.



What's the ruling?





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4.2.2 A Play a SITUATION

4.2.2 SITUATION A1: A's ball, first and 10, on A's 30-yard line. A1 gains possession of the ball prior to A1's flag inadvertently falling to the ground, then B22 touches A1 at A's 35-yard line.

RULING

A1 is marked down at A's 35-yard line.

COMMENT: If a flag belt of the player in possession inadvertently falls to the ground, the defense must deliver a one-hand touch between the shoulders and knees.





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Thank-You
Good Luck the Rest of the
Season!

Questions? Contact us at aosweb.org

