

ADMINISTRATORS, please make sure all 7-12 ON STAFF FOOTBALL COACHES receive and read a copy of this information. **FOOTBALL CREW CHIEF**, please make sure all crew members receive and read a copy of this information. **THANK YOU!**

Chop Block: We have received several reports of chop blocks being performed by offensive linemen. A **chop block is a combination block by two or more teammates against an opponent other than the runner, with or without delay where one of the blocks is at the knee or below and one of the blocks is above the knee.**

Free Blocking Zone: We have defensive players who are blocking lead offensive blockers below the waist on sweeps and on kick returns. **Officials and coaches need to understand that defensive players are prohibited from blocking below the waist on running plays if they were NOT initially on the line of scrimmage at the snap (within one yard) even though the ball is still in the free blocking zone.** Low blocks may only be made against opponents who are in the free blocking zone and are on their line of scrimmage at the snap. These blocks must take place in the zone and before the ball leaves the zone, so in most situations that is a very short time frame. So if a team is running a sweep and the lead blocker is a running back, it is not legal for any defensive player to block below the waist (only the ball carrier can be legally blocked below the waist in this situation).

When a team is in shotgun formation or pistol formation offensive linemen on the line of scrimmage and in the free blocking zone who desire to block an opponent who is on the line of scrimmage and in the free blocking zone **must do so immediately at the snap.** Any delayed block would be considered an illegal block due to the fact the ball has already left the zone.

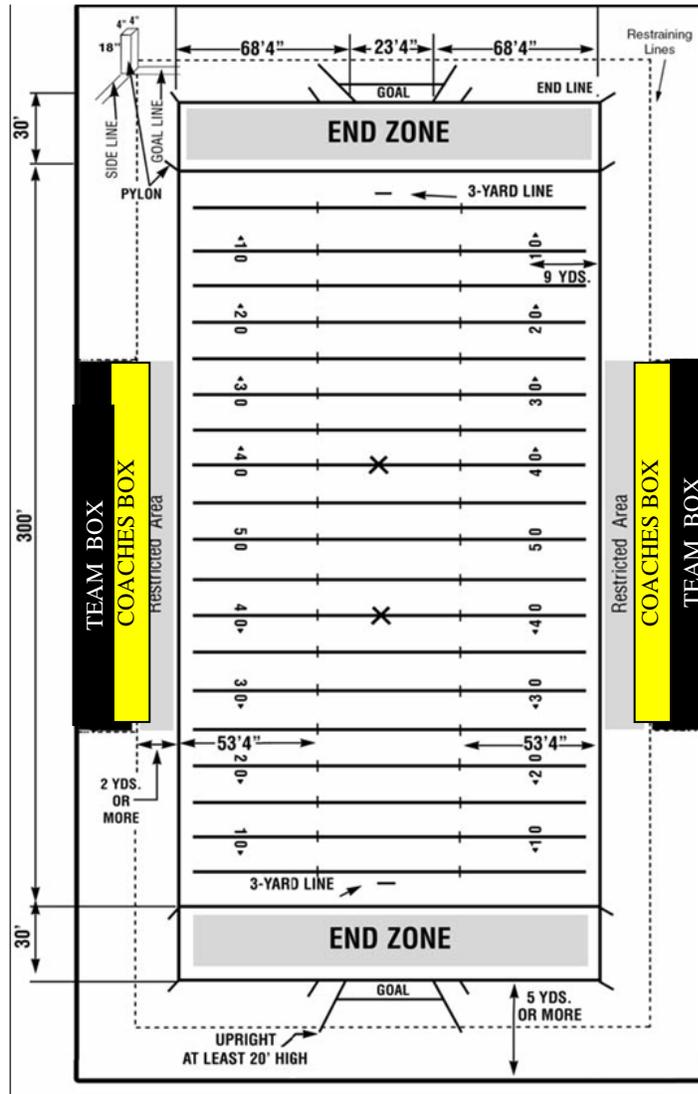
Understand, if a defender spins/turns on a blocker who is otherwise attempting a legal block, the block is legal, even though it may be in the back. Officials, be cognizant of how important it is to see the entire block.

Illegal Forward Pass: First and foremost **we don't have a rule that pertains to the tackle box in high school football.** 7.5.2 Situation C: Quarterback A1 drops back to pass or rolls out to pass and while under a good defensive rush, he throws the ball forward: (a) at the feet of two onrushing defensive linemen; or (b) 15 yards behind A3 who has run a deep post pattern; or (c) 5 to 10 feet over the head of eligible A3 who lined up near the sideline; or (d) A1 throws the ball 15-20 yards out of bounds just beyond the line of scrimmage out on the track around the football field. Ruling: Illegal forward pass (5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and loss of down) in (a) & (d). In (b) & (c), the referee will have to judge whether the pass was intentionally thrown incomplete or whether A1 was simply unable to throw the ball close to A3.

COMMENT: Some factors to look for in making an intentional-grounding decision are absence of eligible offensive receivers in the area and the **“dumping” to avoid loss of distance.** The ability and skill of the passer and the pressure of the defense are also factors to consider but, understand the passer can't throw the ball away to save loss of yardage. **Please also keep in mind in high school football we do not have a non catchable pass rule.**

Referee/Crew Chief: When you officiate varsity football games and provide the coaches with your officiating crew names by position prior to the contest, be sure the crew members names are spelled as they registered with the IHSAA. If a coach desires to provide your crew with an on-line officials evaluation (not required), he is able to locate each crew member on the on-line drop down box, but he can only do that if the name is spelled as he/she registered. Make sure names are printed legible, so the coach can read the names.

Football Field Diagram



COACH'S & OFFICIALS: In my first few nights out observing games I would have to say I'm disappointed in our enforcement of the **RESTRICTED AREA**. Coaches you need to respect this National Federation safety rule and officials you need to make sure this regulation is enforced. **The restricted area (formerly the coaches box, see diagram above)** has been defined where a **maximum of three coaches** may communicate with players and substitutes **during dead ball situations**. The (up to

three) coaches must move behind the restricted area before the ball becomes live and be in the **YELLOW COACHES BOX**. Hopefully you have made plans to keep your players further back (“get-back coach”), so you as coaches in the restricted area have ample room to move into the COACHES BOX area before the ball becomes live. **Administration of any violation of this rule is from the succeeding spot. This National Federation rule has been adopted for safety purposes for all parties involved. Coaches understand you are not to be on the field of play between downs** as this would be considered a violation of the restricted area.

At the **pre-game conference**, coaches and officials need to visit this rule and make sure they have a plan, because all of us understand not every facility has ample room and player squad size will play a role. Officials and head coaches before the game need to decide what procedure coaches are going to incorporate in order to meet this 2009 rule change. Facilities vary from game to game and night to night, so make sure you address this at each pre-game with the head coach and possibly a “get-back-coach,” who will be responsible for making sure everyone is behind the restricted area when the ball becomes live. I have said this before and I will say it again, Iowa coaches are individuals with integrity and character and this rule involves a safety issue for everyone involved and we need each coach’s cooperation and leadership skills, in making sure this rule is abided by.

Officials, it is your responsibility to enforce the rule fairly (both teams) when a violation of the rule takes place. I understand you have a responsibility with players on the field, but when the rule is violated and we expect you to address the situation when it presents itself. Penalty enforcement applies to each individual team pertaining to any violation(s) enforced. Check your sidelines, when the team leaves the huddle or the snap is about to take place, you the official know if someone is in violation or not. The only way you make this work is to apply the rule/penalty. Don’t put your fellow official next week in a position you fail to administer this week. For those officials who have enforced the rule, thank you! For you coaches and staffs who have abided by the rule, thank you!

First offense, flag, team sideline warning applies to the violating team only, no yardage penalty assessed.

2) Second offense, a five-yard penalty for sideline interference, again applies to only the violating team.

3) Third offense, 15 yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct charged to the violating team’s head coach.

Penalty Administration is from the succeeding spot.

HURDLING: Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who has at least one foot on the ground (may be on the run and one foot is off the ground). Penalty: **personal foul.** I think as coaches and officials, need to understand this is a **judgment decision** on an official’s behalf, and if the defender has committed himself by basically launching himself to tackle the runner at the knees or below and the defenders toes are barely touching the ground, and the ball carrier jumps over this defender, I don’t believe you have a hurdling foul.

If the defender breaks down in a squared up stance, similar to a wrestling type stance, and the ball carrier jumps over the defender you have a hurdling foul. Another thing to look for is if the defender had the balls of his foot or feet under him and the ball carrier jumps over the defender you have a hurdling foul and a safety issue.

CONCUSSIONS & OPPORTUNITY FOR A PLAYER TO RETURN: There is no mandated form, but here is a link to a form that can be used -

http://www.iahsaa.org/Sports_Medicine_Wellness/Sportsmed%20Forms/Medical_Release_122812.pdf

Our web site states the **form is recommended**, but not required. As long as the athletic trainer, or other licensed health care professional, signs paper work with the student’s name, date, stating that the athlete can return, and signature of licensed health care professional would meet this requirement. This must be presented to the referee, before the student athlete may return to play in a game in which he/she was requested to leave due to signs or symptoms of a concussion. Referee, you should keep this

paper work and give it back to the home schools Administrator following the contest or send it to the visiting schools Administrator, but do not provide it to any coaching staff member. If you desire a copy for your records, take it home and make a copy and mail the original copy back to the local school administrator who had the student return to play.

YOUR MIND IS LIKE A PARACHUTE, IT WORKS BEST WHEN IT IS OPEN

My Best,

Roger Barr