



WCOA May 2010 Football Newsletter

Fellow official, this is our fourth football newsletter. The intent remains the same; to increase communication within the association and improve our officiating skills, during the off season.

I. Upcoming Dates/ Events

6 May: Middle School Flag Season Ends

8 May: WCOA Spring Clinic Jefferson HS (Mandatory to work Jamborees 20-21 May)

21 May: Spring Jamborees

11-12 June: FHSAA Officials Leadership Conference (Gainesville)

31 July: WCOA Mandatory Summer Clinic (Tampa Catholic)

II. Information from the Board

1. **Jamborees.** There are seven sites in the County hosting Jamborees. The plan is to send 10 official (2 five-man crews), five to work the field the first half while the other five work the chains and the clock. For the second half, they will switch. Additionally, we plan to send a crew to Land O'Lakes to work a game/scrimmage and send a crew, chains, and an ECO to Tampa Catholic to work a game. That is a total of 84 individuals needed on 21 May.
2. **Fingerprints.** The letter the WCOA sent to the County requesting "an exception be granted to exempt WCOA officials from Level II Screening," was disapproved. Therefore, any officials who have a yellow "contractor" ID card that expires in 2010, must be re-printed to be eligible to work any football in the fall...including youth. Also, all new officials who have not been fingerprinted must be fingerprinted to be eligible to work any football in the fall...including youth.

Here's how the process works:

An \$81.25 fee must be paid prior to any official being approved for fingerprinting; this fee can be paid online at www.flprints.com or by calling 1-877-357-7456 (MasterCard or Visa only!)

- We are contractors of the Hillsborough County School District.
- A Criminal Information Form (CIF) must be completed and sent to Phil Crangi via fax or email (this form MUST include your DOB); the CIF can be found on the wcoafla.org website under "Forms".
- Once fees are paid and Phil submits the CIF, the fingerprint office will notify him via email of the officials who are approved to be fingerprinted (this may take up to four weeks).
- Phil will forward the approval email to those officials who MUST print that email on purple/lavender paper (you can print it and have Kinko's or someone similar place it on purple/lavender paper) and take with them to the fingerprint office (officials will not be fingerprinted without the approval email and it MUST be on purple/lavender paper).
- Phil will also forward a SIGNED Fingerprint Verification Form (FVF) that MUST be printed on purple/lavender paper (officials will not be fingerprinted without this form that MUST be printed on purple/lavender paper)
- A money order (no checks, cash, or credit cards will be accepted) for \$4.75 payable to Hillsborough County Public Schools or HCPS MUST be paid at the time of fingerprinting.
- Officials MUST have their original Social Security card AND picture ID/driver's license, along with the forms/fees/approval email mentioned above to be processed for fingerprinting.
- Officials that currently have a yellow "contractor's" card MUST turn that in to the fingerprint office before a new card will be issued; if you lost your card, forgot your card, or are transferring from another county, a \$2 fee will be charged to get a new card.
- If you wait to be fingerprinted after the expiration of your current yellow contractor card, you will be charged \$2 (cash) for a new card; if you have a card that does not expire this year, you do not need to be fingerprinted.
- Once you get a new card, show it to Thom Powers at the next meeting and the WCOA will reimburse you \$25.

Between the end of this school year and the beginning of the new school year, is the busiest time for the fingerprint office. The sooner we get this process started, the sooner we can have all officials printed and ready for the upcoming fall football season. The CIF and FVF forms will be available for those who attend the May 8 clinic at Jefferson HS.

Phil's info: fax # is (813) 908-2750 and email is phil_crangi@yahoo.com. Any questions, call him at (813) 323-8631.

III. Review / Re-Learn / Learn. The intent of this section is to increase everyone's knowledge of the game. Hopefully, you'll review the items listed below and spend at least 15-30 minutes each month reviewing these topics in your rule book.

Positional review. All officials, despite your position, would benefit from reviewing the items below. But at a minimum, review what is listed for your primary position.

1. Referees. Pass play mechanics. (Pg 66, 2009 Officials Manual). Remember, to watch the action around the passer, not the flight of the ball.

2. Umpires. Pass play mechanics. (Pg 66-67, 2009 Officials Manual). Umpires are to set up toward the line of scrimmage during pass plays to assist in determining if a passer is beyond the line of scrimmage and to determine if ineligible receivers are downfield on forward pass plays beyond the line of scrimmage. You also need to assist the referee with illegal forward passes.

3. Wingmen. Pass play mechanics. (Pg 67-68, 2009 Officials Manual). Be aware of your position if the passer becomes a runner.

4. Back Judges. Pass Interference restrictions. (Rule 7-5, Pg 60 2009 Rule Book) You have to know when the restrictions exist for the offense and defense and when they end for both. A frequently missed call is offensive pass interference (OPI), it is illegal for receivers to block downfield from the time of the snap to the time the pass is touched by either team.

In Simple Terms. These are summary statements that make the NFHS rules easier to understand.

- Helmet openings are the back of the helmet near the neck, the ear holes and the edges on the front at the top and around the sides of the helmet.
- If a foul occurs during a down, the basic spot is determined by the action that occurs during the down.
- A coach is not permitted to question any judgment decisions by the officials during a coach-referee conference.

Fundamentals

- Catching is always preceded by touching the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance.
- The distance penalty for any foul may be declined.
- A fair catch may be made of any free kick which is in or beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line or a scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line.

Reminders

- Examine your uniform and equipment and start replacing all items that are worn out, faded, or no longer fit.
- A loose ball is out of bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official that is out of bounds.

Uncommon Fouls' Signals and Penalty Yardage

- Illegal Use of Hands or Arms: Same as Holding signal / 10 yards
- Chop Block: Signal #41 / 15 yards

When in Doubt

- Beyond the line: the pass is backward, rather than forward.

- The ball is dead in the field of play, rather than a touchdown.
- A player is in-bounds, rather than out-of-bounds.
- A player's knee did not touch the ground.
- It is not pass interference.

IV. Physical Fitness. In less than 120 days the season begins. If you haven't started your physical fitness program by now, please do so.

CORE TRAINING. Why do you need to strengthen your core?

Strong core muscles are the cornerstone of physical and mental health. These muscles are attached to the spine, pelvis and muscles that support the shoulder blade. They stabilize these areas to create a firm foundation for a good posture and coordinated movement of the legs and the arms.

A strong, stable core can help to prevent injuries because with stronger muscles supporting the spine, pelvis, and shoulder joints it can better handle the forces of rotation and compression that lead to back and joint injuries.

The muscles of the trunk and torso act to stabilize the spine, pelvis and shoulder girdle. From this solid, balanced base the limbs can be moved powerfully and under control. In fact before rapid movements of the extremities can take place, the central nervous system stabilizes the spine in anticipation. The rate at which the core muscles stabilize the spine may have a direct effect on the power of limb movement.

Core strength training differs from many traditional weight training routines by working both the lower back and abdominals in unison. The same is true for the upper and lower body. All athletic movements incorporate the core in some way. Very few muscle groups are isolated. Instead the whole body works as a unit and core strength training endeavors to replicate this.

What are the benefits of core strength training to the official / athlete?

- Core Strength Training and Athletic Performance. Because the muscles of the trunk and torso stabilize the spine from the pelvis to the neck and shoulder, they allow the transfer of powerful movements of the arms and legs. All powerful movements originate from the center of the body out, and never from the limbs alone. Before any powerful, rapid muscle contractions can occur in the limbs, the spine must be solid and stable and the more stable the core, the most powerful the extremities can contract.
- Greater efficiency of movement.
- Improved body control and balance.
- Reduced risk of injury (the core muscles act as shock absorbers for jumps and rebounds etc.)
- Improved balance and stability
- Improved athletic performance!
- Strengthening the Core Reduces Back Pain. Abdominals get all the credit for protecting the back and being the foundation of strength, but they are only a small part of what makes up the core. In fact, it is weak and unbalanced core muscles that are linked to low back pain. Weak core muscles result in a loss of the appropriate lumbar curve and a

swayback posture. Stronger, balanced core muscles help maintain appropriate posture and reduce strain on the spine.

- Training the muscles of the core also corrects postural imbalances that can lead to injuries. The biggest benefit of core training is to develop functional fitness - that is, fitness that is essential to both daily living and regular activities.
- Core strengthening exercises are most effective when the torso works as a solid unit and both front and back muscles contract at the same time, multi joint movements are performed and stabilization of the spine is monitored.

Strengthening the Core Muscles

There are many exercises that will strengthen the core, as well as exercise equipment that will aid this training. The websites below demonstrate/discuss numerous core issues that you should incorporate into your workout program.

<http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/core-strength-training.html>

<http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/abdominalcorestrength1/a/NewCore.htm>

<http://www.ab-core-and-stomach-exercises.com/core-exercises-.html>

V. **Health/Medical Issue:** Expert information from Doctor Greg Kaiser.

Common Sports Injuries

As officials, we are subject to sports injuries just like any other athlete. However, while we get older, the teams we officiate will always feature young student athletes in the prime of their physical fitness. The bursts of overexertion needed to try and keep up with these players result in some common injuries which are listed below.

- 1) Muscle Pulls – This is probably the most common of all sports injuries and results from overuse, excessive fatigue or taking a fall. This can occur despite stretching and warming up appropriately. A muscle pull occurs when a sudden and severe force is applied to a muscle and the fibers are stretched beyond their capacity. This results in a few of the muscle fibers being sheared and torn apart. The treatment of a muscle pull involves applying ice and resting the affected region until the pain and swelling decrease. Ice relaxes the muscle and helps decrease spasms. Apply ice for cycles of about 20 minutes on, then 20 minutes off. The dull ache disappears in a few days. As soon as tolerable, begin gentle stretching to prevent the injured portion of the muscle from scarring down in a contracted and shortened state, for if not stretched during the final phases of healing, the area will be at a high risk to pull again.

- 2) Ankle Sprain – This happens when the foot rolls to the outside and excessively stretches and “sprains” the ligaments on the outer side of the ankle. The area swells, throbs and often turns black and blue.
The treatment for an ankle sprain is to immediately rest the ankle to prevent further injury, apply ice to try and decrease the swelling, elevate the ankle to also reduced gravitationally dependent swelling and apply compression to both stabilize the ankle and make swelling more difficult.
- 3) Arch Pain – The elastic covering on the sole of the foot, called the plantar fascia, runs the length of the foot and holds the arch up. If this sheet of tissue is overly stretched or partially torn there is pain when putting weight on the foot or pushing off the foot. The pain is also often worse when rising after sitting. Plantar fasciitis is more common in middle-aged people who are sedentary and then suddenly increase physical activity, individuals who gain 10 to 20 pounds or those who wear inappropriately fitting shoes. The treatment of plantar fasciitis features using arch supports to prevent the arch from flattening and stretching. If the arch is not supported, the tissues tear more and the symptoms worsen.
- 4) Shin Splints – The pain from this occurs typically on the inner side of the shin bone from the tearing of muscle tendon fibers away from the bone itself. Shin splints usually occur from running on hard surfaces or simply from overuse of the muscles of the lower leg. The treatment for shin splints also involves arch supports to prevent pronation of the foot (the foot rotating inward placing excessive weight on the arch and big toe side of the foot). Changing to shoes with stiffer arch support when physical activity is being done, using orthotics if necessary and avoiding running on hard surfaces help prevent future problems.
- 5) Runner’s Knee – Known as chondromalacia patella, this condition happens from a misalignment of the kneecap in its groove. Normally, the patella moves up and down in a set groove as the knee joint bends and straightens out. If the kneecap is misaligned, the patella will move off to one side and grind the cartilage around the knee joint and irritate the back of the kneecap. Pain will develop around the back of the patella and the back of the knee after running. On occasion, the knee will swell with fluid secondary to the inflammation caused by this process.
Treatment involves strengthening the quadriceps muscle which blends with the tendons around the kneecap and helps to keep it more aligned. For the pain, simple anti-inflammatory drugs such as buffered aspirin are frequently used.
- 6) Lower Back Strain – This usually occurs from awkwardly twisting the body or doing heavy lifting. Most all lower back injuries are due to weak muscles of the lower back and eventual muscle strain from unadvised activities. Rapid overloading of the muscles causes the fibers to tear, resulting in the back muscles going into spasm and creating the pain.
The treatment of most simple backaches is usually just waiting them out, for they usually go away in a few weeks on their own. If the pain is disabling, ice to the back for 20 minutes at a time and the use of anti-inflammatory or anti-spasmodic drugs usually help.

Physical therapy aimed at strengthening the back and abdominal muscles can help prevent future issues.

A general set of principles to treat sports injuries is the PRICE method. This stands for the following:

- **P**rotect – The injured region should be protected from further injury (splint, cast, etc.).
- **R**estrict – Restricting one's activity will allow the affected area to heal.
- **I**ce – Using ice immediately after the injury will help reduce swelling. Ice is often thought of as a cheap, readily available and very low side effect anti-inflammatory agent. Using ice for 20 minutes every one to two hours for the first 48 hours after injury usually helps reduce the severity of the tissue damage. Do NOT use heat immediately after an injury, for heat promotes swelling and inflammation during the immediate time frame after an injury occurs.
- **C**ompress – Applying an elastic compression bandage helps to reduce swelling and offers some restriction to the involved area.
- **E**levate – Gravity will promote what is called dependent swelling. If the affected area is elevated above the level of the heart, if possible, it will decrease the degree of swelling.

The measures above and common over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drugs or pain relievers typically make most sports injuries tolerable. However, if they do not, it's likely time to see the doctor for further evaluation and therapy.

VI. Miscellaneous

Did you know?

- Approximately 5.8%, or less than one in 17 of all high school senior boys playing interscholastic football will go on to play football at a NCAA member institution.
- Approximately one in 50, or 1.8% of NCAA senior football players will get drafted by a National Football League (NFL) team.
- Thus, seven in 10,000, or approximately 0.07% of high school senior boys playing interscholastic football will eventually be drafted by an NFL team.

Quotations

- "Nobody in football should be called a genius. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein." (Joe Theismann, Retired Washington Redskin)
- "The reason women don't play football is because eleven of them would never wear the same outfit in public." (Phyllis Diller, Comedian)
- "Most football players are temperamental. That's 90 percent temper and 10 percent mental." (Doug Plank, Retired Chicago Bears player)
- "I thought I understood the game of football prior to becoming an official. But when I started getting into the rulebook as a new official, it was like reading Chinese." (Jim Hyson, ACC Umpire)

A Little humor

An official and a coach are seated next to each other on a flight from Tampa to Pittsburgh.

The coach asks if he would like to play a fun game.

The official, tired, just wants to take a nap, politely declines and rolls over to the window to catch a few winks.

The coach persists and explains that the game is easy and a lot of fun.

He explains, "I ask you a question, and if you don't know the answer, you pay me \$5.00, and vice versa."

Again, the official declines and tries to get some sleep. The coach, now agitated, says, "Okay, if you don't know the answer you pay me \$5.00, and if I don't know the answer, I will pay you \$500.00."

This catches the official's attention and, figuring there will be no end to this torment unless he plays, agrees to the game. The coach asks the first question. "What's the distance from the earth to the moon?" The official doesn't say a word, reaches into his wallet, pulls out a \$5.00 bill and hands it to the coach. Okay says the coach, your turn.

The official asks the coach, "What goes up a hill with three legs and comes down with four legs?" The coach, puzzled, takes out his laptop computer and searches all his references, no answer. He taps into the air phone with his modem and searches the net and the library of congress, no answer. Frustrated, he sends e-mails to all his coaching friends, to no avail. After an hour, he wakes the official, and hands him \$500.

The official says, "Thank you", and turns back to get some more sleep.

The coach, who is more than a little miffed, wakes the official and asks, "Well, what's the answer?" Without a word, the official reaches into his wallet, hands the coach \$5.00, and goes back to sleep. Game over!!

Clinic, scrimmages, and Jamborees this month! Good luck and have fun.

Claude Burg
VP Football