

Make the Right Call



WASHINGTON OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

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Nip it in the Bud

Be Right the First Time (Not the Second) by David Simon

We've all been there. You catch some action out of the corner of your eye. You think you "might" have seen something worth a whistle or flag, but you aren't sure. Then, bam, there's a retaliatory shove, and now you're throwing the flag, calling a technical foul or tossing someone out of the game.

Chances are, you're penalizing the wrong person because you missed or passed on the first call. You can't turn back the clock, so how do you get that first one and avoid making a follow-up judgment that may make matters worse?

NCAA men's Division I official Donnie Eppley believes in getting the right calls made regardless of the stage of the game. When you see a foul, call it. If there's a continuous arm in the dribbler's gut, call the hand check. That theory can apply to officials who work other sports as well.

The second call happens when

the first call isn't made by the book, according to Eppley. Getting it right is preventative officiating, making sure the hold doesn't lead to something else. Eppley cites four critical factors for officials: proper positioning, quality court coverage, impeccable rules knowledge and good conditioning. It comes back to preparation, so you're ready for anything.

"Have a good pre-game," Eppley said. "Even if you've worked with the partners before, you need to establish the right mind-set and be ready from the start of the game. There might be a three-pointer right after the opening tap and you have to see where the shooter's feet are. It could be the difference in the game."

As NFL Line Judge Tim Podraza put it, "The list of excuses is endless." But there are many reasons the first one blows by, including a lack of focus or "not watching our keys." Seeing the whole play

is critical, according to both Eppley and Podraza. They emphasized getting the best angle and avoiding tunnel vision. Conversely, sometimes just getting a wide view prevents seeing the first act.

And sometimes, officials just see the first action as a gray area; Too tough to make a judgment. "Remember, if we think it's a foul, it's not. It is only a foul when we know for sure it's a foul," Podraza pointed out.

Podraza advises other football officials to follow their keys and "use proper mechanics to create the best opportunity to get the call right. Watching lots of video helps train our thinking to recognize fouls. We must have accurate foul recognition. The more snaps we watch, and feedback we receive, will improve our accuracy rate." Eppley sees the knowledge base growing, allowing officials to do some things now that they couldn't in the past.

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WOA Executive Board Meeting

The WOA Executive Board meeting was held Monday, January 9.

The following action was taken at the meeting:

- Discussed the background

check process and frequency of processing the data.

- Approved a request to become a sponsor of the 2012 NASO Summit. The 2012 NASO Summit will be held in Portland.
- Approved the development of a WOA Officials Manual to replace the NFHS Officials Manual in football, baseball, basketball and softball.

Special points of interest:

- GETTING IT RIGHT IS PREVENTATIVE OFFICIATING
- FOUR CRITICAL FACTORS: PROPER POSITIONING, QUALITY COURT COVERAGE, IMPECCABLE RULES KNOWLEDGE AND GOOD CONDITIONING
- HAVE A GOOD PREGAME - YOU NEED TO ESTABLISH THE RIGHT MIND SET AND BE READY FROM THE START OF THE GAME
- PREPARATION: BE READY FOR ANYTHING

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Make the Right Call



(l to r) Tom Jones II, South Sound; Wayne Agness, Tacoma; Michael Smith, Seattle

Photo Courtesy of Max Howard

Nip it in the Bud (continued)

“We need to use preventative officiating and talk to players on borderline plays,” Podraza advised. That can include telling players they are very close on extracurricular activity; letting a defensive player know he is very close on the lineup and timing; reminding players to keep their hands off the helmet and facemask, and getting to the captains and coaches know you have talked to specific players.

Missing the first call can happen anytime and cover multiple situations, but Eppley believes rebounding in basketball is frequently one of the situations where you can miss the first call, then have to respond to a second. “A player will come down with the ball and there’s contact, but not quite enough to justify a whistle, then the rebounder throws an elbow and you have to call it. It’s too late to penalize the first guy. You’re caught by

surprise. Remain focused at all times to get the first one and make a good judgment.”

If you don’t get it right the first time, try, try again, as the saying goes. Keep learning from the situations you’ve experienced, share stories with fellow officials, watch yourself on video, prepare and focus. Next time you’ll be ready for the first call.

(The full version of this article can be found in, Referee magazine, January 2012)

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“WHEN ALL WAS SAID AND DONE, EVERYONE HAD A GREAT TIME, LUNCH WAS SERVED, AND AFTER EXPENSES WE RAISED \$2,150 THAT WAS DONATED TO THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY.”

WOA Football Committee

In order to develop the new WOA Football Officials Manual, it was important to put together a committee of dedicated football officials that would be able to complete such a daunting task in time for the 2012 season. The committee will consist of nine officials, with at least one from each of the six regions.

As is the case with all

changes in mechanics, each association will have input into the proposed changes. The committee will be charged with implementing the approved changes and make sure they are added to future editions of the officials manual.

The manual will continue to be published every two years.

Thank you to the following who have agreed to serve on the WOA Football Committee:

Larry LaBree, Whatcom-Skagit
Dean Corcoran, Snohomish Co
Rob Spero, Pacific Northwest
Rick Wells, Pacific Northwest
Don Ferguson, Western WA
Mike Burton, Western WA
Dave Krajcar, Evergreen
Jim Ryder, Tri Cities
Scott Cordell, Inland Empire

SWWFOA Officials-Coaches Golf Tournament

It was a cool and slightly cloudy August morning when about 90 football officials, coaches, players, and other guests gathered at the Newaukum Valley Country Club just south of Chehalis for some golf and good times. The event was the first annual SWWFOA Officials-Coaches Golf Tournament. Officials from three different associations, coaches from several schools, and football

players and fans split into four person teams for an 18 hole scramble. The goal - play some golf, interact, chat, get to know each other better, and raise funds to fight cancer. Many local businesses stepped up to sponsor a hole, provide prizes, and support our effort. When all was said and done, everyone had a great time, lunch was served, and after expenses we

raised \$2,150 that was donated to the American Cancer Society - not bad for a small association of 40 members. We plan to do it again this August and are hoping for 144 participants and a goal of \$3,000. For additional information and to reserve your spot, contact the Southwest Washington Football Officials Association at wwwfoa@comcast.net.



Bob Berg, SW Washington Football and Basketball. Bob also serves on the WOA Executive Board representing Region 4.

Photo Courtesy of George Eastman

Basketball: Common....Intentional.....Flagrant

Recently, WIAA and WOA have had several discussions on the different types of tools that can be used to adjust the behavior of players throughout the game. Below are the NFHS definitions for common, intentional and flagrant fouls:

Rule 4-19-2: A common foul is a personal foul which is neither flagrant nor intentional nor committed against a player trying or tapping for a field goal nor a part of a double, simultaneous, or multiple foul.

Rule 4-19-3: An intentional foul is a personal or technical foul that may or may not be premeditated and is not based solely on the severity of the act. Intentional fouls include, but are not limited to:

a. Contact that neutralizes an opponent's obvious advantageous position.

b. Contact away from the ball with an opponent who is clearly not involved with a play.

c. Contact that is not a legitimate attempt to play the ball/player specifically designed to stop the clock or keep it from starting.

d. Excessive contact with an opponent while playing the ball.

e. Contact with a thrower-in as in 9-2-10 Penalty 4.

Rule 4-19-4: A flagrant foul may be a personal or technical foul of a violent or savage nature, or a technical noncontact foul which displays unacceptable conduct. It may or

may not be intentional. If personal, it involves, but it is not limited to violent contact such as: striking, kicking and kneeling. If technical, it involves dead-ball contact or noncontact at any time which is extreme or persistent, vulgar or abusive language. Fighting is a flagrant act.

It is important that officials understand the tools available to them when dealing with an infraction of the rules. Sometimes it is necessary to "upgrade" a foul to intentional if rough play turns into excessive contact. By doing so, a clear message is sent to all the participants outlining what behavior will not be tolerated.

Wrestling: Concussions Revisited

The following information was sent out November 2010:

As we look at putting this procedure into action, allow us to share a strategy that has proven to work well in not only addressing the safety issue, but reducing questions and/or arguments from the coach. Advise the coach in the pre-meet talk, clearly and concisely, the steps you are going to take.

1. If a wrestler exhibits behaviors you believe are consistent with a possible concussion, the match will be stopped.

2. Call the coach out to attend to his/her wrestler.

3. Tell the coach exactly what happened (maybe use the words "you saw" instead of

'happened') and the specific behaviors observed (signs/symptoms) that caused concern.

4. Advise the coach that the wrestler is now under his/her supervision and care.

5. Start the injury (or recovery) clock, and move away, allowing the coach to attend to his/her wrestler.

6. Document on the score sheet.

In using these steps, we have done our job. We saw a blow to the head. We observed signs/symptoms. We responded by removing the athlete from competition and put him/her under the supervision and care of the coach. It is the responsibility of the coach to make the

decision if follow-up examination by a healthcare professional is needed. If the coach makes the decision to put the wrestler back in, the official should monitor closely. If he/she observes any repeated/additional signs, stop the match and repeat the process.

If the official is clear with the coach(es) in the pre-meet about the steps he/she is going to take, and reminds the coach that the intent of the rule is to protect the athlete and err on the side of safety (as stated in on-line clinic, "When in doubt, hold them out."), it will establish a basis for the coach to make a quality decision when things may be emotionally charged.



Drew Hendel, Pacific Northwest

Photo Courtesy of Dale Garvey

Mechanics Procedure

When another member of the crew feels that a common foul should be "upgraded" to intentional or flagrant, that official should double up on the call with his/her partner. In the pre game the crew should decide how they want to deal with this type of situation. The call is reported as such by the official who upgraded. He/she will then take responsibility for the call.



Randy Audette, Whatcom-Skagit

Photo Courtesy of Linda Johnson



Officiating the Game for the Athletes!

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Note from the Commissioner:

The Winter State Tournaments are quickly approaching - Have you purchased your WIAA State Tournament Pass? If not, please contact your assigner. The pass provides a significant savings if you plan on attending multiple days of the upcoming state tournaments.

The WIAA has made a change to the State Basketball Tournament. The format for the first round games will now be loser-out. For 2012, the boys will play on Friday and the girls will play on Saturday. The reason I mention the change is that it impacts officials in two different ways. The first is that we will need to assign twice as many officials per gender (144 per night). The second is that officials will work only one game. The new loser-out format creates a lot of excitement for fans and should lead to some great games. With the excitement and intensity comes the need for officials to be at their best, both on and off the court. Good luck to all the officials who will be selected for these games, we know you will represent the WOA and your local association/board well.

Todd Stordahl
WOA Commissioner



Bob Graham, Colville Valley Basketball

Photo Courtesy of Tom Graham

www.woa-officials.com

WOA Spotlight: Bob Graham

Bob Graham was a member of Colville Valley Basketball from 1954 until 1992, officiating in thirty league and district tournaments, as well as six state tournaments. In addition to his time spent on the court, Bob served as a member of the WOA Executive Board and an evaluator at State Basketball.

"The most irritating thing in any game is a whistle!" was one of Bob's favorite sayings and truly the measure by which he lived his life.

"I remember a time or two when Bob told me to fuel the

team bus at his service station and he'd send the bill later....a bill never came." recalls John Magers, retired Northport Superintendent.

Bob's generosity was felt by many, "He is suspected of being the anonymous Santa Claus of Northport", stated Jerry Falk, Colville Valley Basketball.

After his sixth state tournament Bob asked that his name no longer be submitted for consideration. He wanted other good officials to experience the ultimate reward for officials working

in a remote association....to call the state tournament! Whether it was donating fuel, not cashing checks or removing his name from consideration for state tournaments, he believed these acts would have one very important outcome: It would remove at least one whistle from their game!

The man frequently referred to as the "Bobfather of Northport" passed away on December 23, 2011. The WIAA, WOA and Colville Valley truly benefitted from his decision to be involved in interscholastic athletics.



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