

The Season

What a long strange trip it’s been (“Truckin”  [Jerry Garcia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_Garcia), [Bob Weir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Weir), [Phil Lesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phil_Lesh), and lyricist [Robert Hunter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Hunter_%28lyricist%29))

Strange does not begin to describe the state of high school athletics and in fact all sports at all levels. Unless you are playing in a bubble, it doesn’t appear that it’s possible to safely play at all. The University of Alabama has been open for 1 week and has 500 new cases of Covid-19.

We are scheduled to begin our season on January 8th. If you do not have long sleeves, you might want to invest in some. The average low temperature in January is 47 degrees

Testing

I have received the tests from CFOA but I do not plan to open up testing until November. If you’ve been participating in study groups, that’s fine, but I don’t want to open up testing early for 2 reasons. First, many will forget what they’ve learned by January if I open the tests now. Second, it’s possible that we will not have a season at all. In that case, I will use the tests for next season.

Two years ago I made several YouTube videos that covered the question, the answer and the rule reference along with any other pertinent information of the 5 tests. I’m going to do that again this season. What I’m going to ask of you, is that you all take the tests individually (not in study groups), do the best you can and then watch the videos for the interpretation of the questions you had trouble with. I think this will be a much more valuable learning experience. If you want to become a rules guru, it is not going to happen in a study group.

New uniform standard

I may have already touched on this. The default standard uniform for ALL games next season will be the varsity uniform (long pants). Honigs, Cliff Keene and Smittys all sell extremely light weight pants. I wore them several times last year and they are really comfortable and cool and I didn’t have to worry about sunburn. If you want to wear shorts for a weight game, you can, all 3 officials must agree to wear shorts, make sure you coordinate. If you do wear shorts, you should wear quarter length black socks (not no shows). No more white calf socks.

If you are wondering why I’m doing this, it basically comes down to perception. When we walk on the field we should look as professional as possible. Shorts do not look professional. Most other associations abandoned shorts for high school games long ago. Shorts will still be the standard for youth football.

New sportsmanship guidelines

CIF has issued new sportsmanship guidelines, they are on our website <https://ocfoa.org/2020/08/16/cif-sportsmanship-and-ejection-policy/>

These changes were passed overwhelmingly by the representatives of the schools.

You should definitely review the bylaw change. One of the major changes is that anyone coming on the field during a fight is immediately ejected. They do not have to participate in the fight; entering the field will result in ejection. If they happen to be coming on due to a change of possession or as a substitute, they must stop and return immediately to the team box. The CIF recommends that teams practice this.

The other big change is the sanction for fighting or coming off the bench. For the “First Ejection: Player (Fighting/Assaultive Behavior/Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct) is ineligible to participate in the team’s next three (3) to six (6) contests as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.” This is quoted directly from the new bylaw. Referees should cover this in their pregame conference with the coaches.

The CIF has been meeting with all the athletic directors and hopefully they will pass the new guidelines on to their coaches. These new standards apply to all CIF sports not just football. That’s why you see a range of game suspensions for fighting. A 5-game suspension for a football player represents half of his season whereas for a basketball player it would only be about 20% so CIF is trying to keep the percentages equitable.

New website

Speaking of the website, I hope you’ve had a chance to check out our completely redesigned website. The website will be the repository for all announcements and events. There is a particularly good search tool and the layout has been completely redesigned. Big props to Troy Leonard for his input and assistance in getting this new site up.

Meetings

I plan on starting meetings in November. The meetings will be virtual and at this point, I am planning on using Google Meet and Google Classroom. There will be 9 groups made up of 3 crews each along with non-crew members. In order to participate you must have a Gmail account. If you have a Google account but it is registered using a different email provider (i.e. Yahoo, AOL, sbcglobal, etc.) you will have to create a new account that has a Gmail account attached to it. You don’t have to use the Gmail account for anything other than the classroom stuff.

Arbiter Hack

As most of you know Arbiter suffered a data breach and is requiring that you change your password. Simply go to the Arbiter login page, enter your email and then click where it says “Trouble Signing In” you can change your password from there. I have been told by Arbiter support that the breach affected everyone in Arbiter. Others in our association have said that Arbiter told them that only certain members had their data stolen. If you were affected, you receive correspondence from Arbiter describing what happened and offering 1 year of credit monitoring through Experian for free. I got a letter via snail mail today; it seems others have received emails.

Packets

Packets are still available. I have about 10 left, Tony Bryant has 4, Richard Wilson has 18 and Jeff Roberts has 26. Contact one of us if you still need a packet.

Rules; The Runner Slides

We will finish up with a rule discussion. I’ve been told that some in the association have said that when a ball carrier slides, the play is dead as soon as the slide begins, and the ball is placed where the slide began. That is not true. The ball should be placed where it was located when any part of the runner’s body other than his feet or his hand touch the ground or go out of bounds. When a runner slides, it is the defense’s responsibility to recognize that he is sliding and not deliver a hit unless the contact is unavoidable.