

**Testing**

All the tests are available on the Arbiter Central Hub. As I’ve stated previously, I think it would give you the most benefit (especially the newer guys) to take the tests on your own. Use the rule book as much as you can. Once you have submitted your test, you can review the test using a new feature in Arbiter. Once you’ve complete the test you will see this link on the testing page



Click on the link and it will show you what you answered for each question and if you missed the question, what the correct answer is.

In addition, I have made YouTube videos that discuss all 180 questions. I go over the question, the terminology, the reasoning behind the answer and the answer itself. 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. Once you have completed a test, shoot me an email and I will send you the link to the YouTube video that covers that test. Please keep these links to yourself, I think it would benefit everyone to go through this process. I want these tests to be educational, not punitive. Do the best you can and then learn from your mistakes, that is how we get better!!!

I have added a mechanics test. The first one in years. Thanks so much to Mike Darakjian for his help on creating this test. Awesome job Mike!!

**What happens if we don’t have a season?**

If it turns out that we don’t have a season this year, these tests will carry over to next season. If there are new rules for 2021 we will publish a short test that covers the new rules explicitly.

Second, it’s possible that we will not have a season at all. In that case, I will use the tests for next season.

**Plays of the Week**

Due to my recent knee replacement, I haven’t been able to sit at my computer until this past week. In the meantime there are 6 videos from the CFOA Visual casebook that cover DPI (2), Holding (2), Roughing the kicker, and a updated 40 second clock video. If you haven’t watched these, I highly recommend them, much of the content comes from Steve Coover.

There are also some standard edition “Plays of the Week” they can all be found here <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL11LmkFIXr3ziVbwghEeRflt6RIV4vjH1>

I will start making new ones in the next few days. If you haven’t already please subscribe to the OCFOA YouTube channel so you will get immediate notification of the release of new videos.

Meetings

With the season again pushed back, I don’t have a schedule for meetings. My plan is to have the first meeting the month prior to the start of the season. That first meeting will cover the classification test. Every question on the classification test is also on one of other 5 tests, so if you do those tests, you should have no trouble with the classification test. I originally planned on conducting the meetings using Google Meet and Google Classroom.. Zoom has really improved their product so my gut feeling is that we will now use Zoom. Over 80 members participated in a dry run last Wednesday and for the most part it was very well received. Thank you so much to those of you that participated. It’s impossible for me to do this in a bubble. Some of the meetings will be held in smaller 20 -25 member groups made up of 3 crews (15 people) and approximately 10 non-crew members. The meetings will be held throughout the week, so if you can’t make your group’s meeting you can join another group’s meeting. There really should be no need for make up meetings this year.There may be a need (elections for instance) where it makes more sense to meet as a large group. I will keep you posted.

**Packets**

Packets are still available. I have about 8 left, I don’t know how many Tony Bryant, Richard Wilson, or Jeff Roberts have left. Contact one of us if you still need a packet.

**Getting it Right**

# The following is from the November issue of Referee Magazine. Referee Magazine is a great source of information and I highly recommend it. This article is titled

# “**It’s OK to pick up a flag or put one down late”**

By Jon Bible

Jon Bible is one of my favorite writers for Referee. He’s officiated in the NFL and the Big 12. He’s currently a replay official for the Southeast conference. This article has some great advice in it and I think it would be a great topic of discussion amongst your crew.

Back in the day there were two commonly accepted officiating axioms: Don’t pick up a flag once it’s put down and don’t put one down late. The idea was that either will make us look uncertain, which can be a kiss of death. There was, frankly, also a macho aspect to the first one: I own my position and my calls, and I don’t need help in making them. If I’m wrong, too bad.

How times have changed. Today, at the pro and collegiate levels, flags are picked up relatively often and put down late. That should be the practice at all levels. The question is when to do it.

All coaches will tell you they’d rather we miss a foul that should have been called than call one that isn’t there — the “phantom” call. Pro and collegiate grading practices reflect that, as more points are deducted for a phantom call than for a missed call. On the field we need to factor that into our thinking along with today’s (appropriate) mantra: Get the call right.

Angles mean everything. For instance, I may be convinced X blocked Y in the back, but another angle may show he didn’t. I may be sure a defender who was not playing the ball deserves a flag because he got into the body of the receiver before the pass arrived, but another angle may show there was three feet between them.

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The sea change in thinking in recent years is that if I throw a flag but you, with a different angle, come to me and say you had a better look and I was wrong, I should pick up my flag unless I’m 100 percent sure I’m right. That is as it should be. Two caveats, however: Don’t speak up unless you are 100 percent sure I’m wrong, and then it’s my decision whether to pick up my flag.

Once, an official was about to bring back an 80-yard punt return for a touchdown because of a block in the back. TV showed it was a legal side block. Fortunately, another official saw it, went to the calling official and told him that, and he picked up the flag. Can you imagine the uproar that would have ensued if the official hadn’t intervened or the one who made the call refused to admit his error? As it happened, some people were upset for about 20 seconds and that was it.

Another area that has been changed in the college game involves uncatchable passes with flags for interference. It used to be if I threw a flag and another official thought the pass was uncatchable, he’d come ask if I thought it was catchable. How do I know? I’m so involved in my call that I’ve probably lost sight of where the pass ended up. So, don’t ask, just tell me it was uncatchable. That you came to me should, except in the rare case, be enough for me to pick up my flag.

To shift gears, there are times when it’s appropriate to put a flag down late. Say one official responsible for counting the defense pre-snap has 12 but the others (which will vary depending on the crew size) don’t signal their agreement. The first official should wait until the play is over, herd the defense up before it leaves the field and count the players; if there are 12, put the flag down. For sure don’t blow the whistle to kill the play when you’re the Lone Ranger. That happened recently. One official had 12 and, although the other two hadn’t signaled agreement, blew his whistle; due to the crowd noise, the play got off and a safety was improperly negated because there were, in fact, only 11 defenders on the field.

Say the quarterback is under duress and slings the ball away without getting outside the tackle box. The referee must stay with him to prevent him from getting mauled, so he can’t track the flight of the ball. That must be a crew call. If another official runs to him and tells him there was no eligible receiver in the area — or the ball didn’t get to the neutral zone if the quarterback did get out of the tackle box — that’s when the flag should go down for intentional grounding.

You’re a back judge: The receiver you’re keying is held downfield, but you glance at the quarterback and he’s not looking that way, so you hold your flag. So far, no harm, no foul. Now he does look that way, so the hold does become relevant, and you toss your flag. That is how it should work. TV announcers go nuts and talk about “late flags,” but what we’re doing is processing the action and calling what matters.

In sum, the old thinking was that we should stay in our lane on the field. Each of us had areas of responsibility and, as a rule, we didn’t get out of them. Now it’s 180 degrees opposite. If I’ve got information you need, I’ll give it to you. If you come to me, I’m not going to let my ego get in the way. I’ll listen and process what you say. Best case, the result will be that a flag for a phantom foul gets picked up or we put one down that needs to be there, albeit late. We may get some flak and have to do some explaining to a coach, but that’s far better than letting a mistake occur that could have been corrected.

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