



Major Changes In Michigan High Football Rules

This year there are numerous rule changes which Michigan High School Football Coaches must be aware of when preparing their teams. The major changes are involved with: (1) uniform numbering, (2) butt blocking and face tackling, and (3) the neutral zone. Most of the rule changes were determined at the 1976 State Football Rules Committee meeting in East Lansing on May 10.

The rule which will concern most coaches will be the change in tackling and blocking techniques. The State sent out the following flier at the end of the school year.

It has become obvious in recent years that the teaching of blocking by using the mask and helmet as the initial contact is a questionable technique and has needed evaluation. The National Alliance Football Rule Committee in January 1976 defined butt-blocking and face-tackling and classified them as personal fouls, resulting in fifteen yard penalties.

BUTT-BLOCKING

(Rule 2-2-2) — The revision defines butt-blocking as a technique involving a blow with the face mask, frontal area or top of the helmet driven directly into the opponent as the primary point of contact either in close line play or in the open field. In 1964, the Points of Emphasis first included any reference to the injury hazard to players from the technique of Butt-Blocking. Since then, this technique has been the subject of Points of Emphasis on six different occasions. This change will require coaches to teach different techniques in blocking in order for

players to comply with the rules. It is anticipated players will be taught to keep the head up in a stable position and their eyes fixed on the target so at the last moment prior to contact they can move their head to one side or the other, "skinning the ear", so primary contact is made with the shoulder. Such technique will protect the blocker from injury to his head and neck. It will also protect his opponent from direct contact with hard surfaces of the helmet and/or face mask.

The new Blocking Rule does not in anyway change Blocking Coverage in Rule 9-1. Rules covering the use of hands, and elbows remains the same as in the previous years.

FACE-TACKLING

(Rule 2-2-4) — The revision identifies face-tackling as driving the face mask, frontal area or top of the helmet directly into the runner. The use of this technique has proved to be dangerous not only to the runner, but also to the tackler. Using the head as the primary point of contact has resulted in injuries to the cervical spine, in some cases causing quadriplegia. Face-tackling is designated as a personal foul in the same category as butt-blocking. Both techniques are condemned by the American Football Coaches Association. The use of equipment designed to teach butt-blocking and/or face-tackling is also condemned. In order to comply with the rule, coaches must revise their teaching methods and techniques and instruct players to focus their eyes on their target, but

(Continued on Page 4)

Steve Sonoga Resigns

At the July meeting of the MHSFCA Board of Directors, Steve Sonoga resigned as Secretary-Treasurer. Steve's contributions to our football organization will surely be missed.

In 1968 Steve came to Jackson from Youngstown, Ohio, where he had been a Regional Director for the Ohio Football Coaches Association. This background provided our organization with an excellent resource person. He was an active member of the Jackson Area Football Coaches Association and from that membership came the idea to have the MHSFCA. On February 4, 1972, a meeting was held at the Holiday Inn in Grand Rapids to set up a Coach of the Year Clinic. Coaches from throughout the state attended and on February 28, 1972, a constitution meeting was held at Mt. Pleasant to formulate a constitution and select a slate of officers. On March 24 at East Lansing High School the constitution was adopted and Steve Sonoga was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The first MHSFCA Clinic was held at Jackson Parkside High School and over 800 coaches attended with Coach Sonoga being in charge of the clinic along with registration, membership, and election of the regional directors.

From 1972 through 1976 Steve did an outstanding job for the MHSFCA along with the help of his wife Peg Sonoga. At the present time Steve and Peg are managers of the Tawas Country Club and he informs us that all members of the MHSFCA are always welcome at the Country Club.

Many thanks Steve and Peg for all your hours of work and dedication to the MHSFCA and we know that our football organization would not be what it is today without your effort and leadership.

Officers

President

Ron Holland, Farmington

1st Vice-President

Ivan Muhlenkamp, St. Joseph

2nd Vice-President

Jeff Smith, East Lansing

Secretary-Treasurer

John Blackstock, Bad Axe

Public Relations

Dick Comar, Southgate Aquinas

Past President

Dave Driscoll, Jackson Parkside

Dutch Strottenboer, Alpena

Bud Breed, Portage Northern

Directors

Region 1

Ken Semelsberger, Detroit Servite

Dave Woodcock, Catholic Central

Region 2

Don Lessner, Riverview

Ron Pascuzzi, Lincoln Park

Region 3

Jim Crowley, Jackson Lumen Christi

Chuck Miller, Vandercook Lake

Region 4

Al Fisher, Battle Creek Lakeview

Curt Evans, Homer

Region 5

Harley Pierce, Sturgis High

Terry Rose, Lake Michigan Catholic

Region 6

Walt Braun, Marysville

Don Weichert, L'Anse Creuse North

Region 7

Al Fracassa, Brother Rice

John Herrington, Harrison

Region 8

Dick Flynn, Lansing Eastern

John Seckinger, Brighton

Region 9

Jack VerDuin, Wyoming Park

George Barcheski, East Grand Rapids

Region 10

Fred Rademacher, Flint Powers

Dar Christiansen, Flint Southwestern

Region 11

Arnie Bessonon, Owen-Gage

Region 12

Dick Harris, Harrison

Jim Colville, Clare

Region 13

Tom Seroczynski, Fruit Port

Tim Holden, Fruit Port

Region 14

Art Gillespie, Alpena

Joe Veselenak, Rogers City

Region 15

Jim Ooley, Traverse City

Roger Wood, Traverse City

Region 16

John Srholec, Marquette

Jerry Cvengros, Escanaba

Detroit Public School To Have Football

Through the generosity of the Bank of the Commonwealth, the Detroit Public Schools will have football this fall. The voters in Detroit turned down the millage on August 3 and it appeared that there would be no athletic contests in the city of Detroit for the 76-77 school year. On August 25, the gift of \$100,000 reinstated the football program on a limited basis since a full football program would cost an estimated \$236,000 per year.

Dr. Robert Luby, divisional director of health, physical education, and safety for the Detroit Public Schools, stated that he had "mixed feelings" about the donation of the Bank of the Commonwealth. "Although I am happy about the donation, in a way we're postponing the problem." "And, in the long run, if the millage doesn't pass it will make our extra-curricular programs in even worse shape."

Another millage vote will probably be placed before the voters in Detroit sometime in November. The future of athletics in Detroit will be greatly determined by the outcome of the vote.

JOHN BLACKSTOCK New MHSFCA Secretary-Treasurer

At the July Summer Meeting of the MHSFCA, John Blackstock of Bad Axe was elected by the Board of Directors upon the recommendation of President Ron Holland as the Secretary-Treasurer to replace Steve Sonoga.

John has been the Director for Region 11 since the beginning of the MHSFCA in 1972. He has taken a very active part in the organization and he is most noted for being the editor of the MHSFCA Newsletter. All of the Newsletters have been written by Mr. Blackstock. John has been the head football coach at Bad Axe and he is a very respected member of our organization.

As the secretary-treasurer, he will be responsible for all official records of the MHSFCA as well as in charge of membership. We know that he will do an outstanding job because he is a very capable person.

Newsletter

The Newsletter is the official publication of the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association with the expressed aim of keeping the membership informed.

Editor

Don Lessner

Riverview High School
Riverview, Michigan 48192

Printed by Hebda Service Printing of Wyandotte, Michigan.

1976 FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

This year the Michigan High Football Playoffs will be at Pontiac Stadium on Saturday, November 27. The Playoffs will be divided into two sessions:

Session -1 (Classes D & A)

Session -2 (Classes C & B)

The morning session will include the Class D game at 10:00 a.m. followed by the Class A game at 1:00 p.m. The second session include the Class C game at 5:00 p.m. and the Class B game at 8:00 p.m. All tickets are general admission and \$3.00 per session.

Schools may use the advance sale as a fund raiser. For each ticket sold before November 10, 50¢ may be kept by the participating school. After November 10, tickets will be sold at \$3.00 per session.

If you are interested in ordering tickets contact:

Michigan H.S. Athletic Assoc.
1019 Trowbridge Road
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

THANK YOU

A sincere "thank you" to Head Football Coach Dick Look of Tawas High and the Tawas Board of Education for the use of their fine facilities for the MHSFCA Summer Board of Directors Meeting. We would also like to thank Steve and Peg Sonoga for the excellent food and entertainment at the Tawas Country Club.

FOOTBALL ALL STAR GAME UPDATE

The MHSFCA is considering the possibilities of an All Star Football Game. Coaches Harley Pierce of Sturgis High School and Don Lessner of Riverview High School have been assigned to investigate the feasibility of an All Star Game.

Contacts will be made with as many states as possible to get their philosophies on High School All-Star Football Games and to find out how they operate and organize these games.

A questionnaire will be given to all coaches at the 1977 MHSFCA January Football Clinic with the following questions:

1. Are you in favor of a Michigan All-Star High School Football Game?
2. Would you take an active part if asked to do so?
3. Would you be willing to help sell tickets to members of your football team, athletic department, school members and community?

Harley Pierce attended the Illinois All-Star Game and Don Lessner attended the Ohio All-Star Game.

What do you think about an All-Star Football Game???

MHSFCA — Honorary Membership

Do you know of any person who should be an Honorary Member of the MHSFCA. Any MHSFCA member can submit in writing a nomination for honorary membership by November 15, 1976, to the Honorary Membership Committee Chairman:

Mr. Al Fischer
Head Football Coach
Battle Creek Lakeview High School
300 South 28th Street
Battle Creek, Michigan 49015

1. Sports writers who have aggressively supported football over a period of years.
2. Coaches who have retired after twenty or more years as an active coach and who have performed some meritorious service for the association or the game of football.
3. Dedicated individuals who have contributed outstanding services to the development of football.

Those awarded Honorary Membership will receive a lifetime Honorary Membership Card and a Certificate of Recognition.

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

This copy of the MHSFCA Newsletter is being sent to all head football coaches in the state of Michigan and members of the organization. Four Newsletters are sent out per year and to receive the other three Newsletters **one must be a member of the association.** See page 4 for a membership form. The cost for membership for the MHSFCA is \$2.00 and a joint membership for the MHSFCA and MHSFCA is only \$5.00.

This is your organization so please take an active part by seeing that you and the members of your coaching staff are participating members.

Rules Committee Report

The MHSFCA Rules Committee headed up by Coach Walt Braun of Marysville High School have listed the following as their top priorities at the July Summer Meeting:

1. Number limitation (3) be removed from summer workouts.
2. Permit the use of dummies and blocking shields during the week of conditioning.
3. Permit two scrimmages for each school prior to the first scheduled game.
4. Develop more continuity on the M.H.S.A.A. Football Committee. Suggest several members be appointed to two year terms instead of the present one year terms.

If you have any suggestions in regard to football rules, contact Walt Braun at Marysville High School.

4th Annual Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Clinic

When: January 28-29, 1977

Where: Pioneer High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan

Director: Mr. Fred Rademacher of Flint Powers High School

Over 1400 high school football coaches are expected at the Fourth Annual MHSFCA Football Clinic this coming January. A top list of clinic speakers from the Michigan High School ranks will be featured along with the possibility of having Coach "Bo" Schembechler of the University of Michigan as a guest speaker on the evening of January 28.

Coach Chuck Ritter of Pioneer High School has been working with the MHSFCA Board of Directors for the last year in preparations for the clinic.

MHSFCA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

The next meeting of the MHSFCA Board of Directors will be on Thursday, December 2, at 10:00 a.m. at the Ramada Inn in Midland, Michigan.

MAJOR CHANGES IN MICHIGAN HIGH FOOTBALL RULES

(Continued from Page 1)

immediately prior to contact move their head to the side so the principal contact is made with the shoulder. The danger in face-tackling is greater to the tackler because his head is often not in a protected, stable position when contact is made with the opponent, resulting in extreme flexion or hyper-extension of the neck. In these positions, the neck is most vulnerable to injury. A blow to the top of the head when the neck is in flexion may result in permanent injury.

COACHES ARE NOT TO TEACH BUTT-BLOCKING AND FACE-TACKLING. No one has the option of ignoring this rule.

JERSEY NUMBERS

This year coaches must be aware of his teams jerseys and the number that each player is wearing. Rule 1-5-1 states that numbers on the jersey must be of **single color** in contrast with the jersey color. If a team offends this rule, there will be a 15 yard penalty administered at the start of **each** half. Coaches and officials cannot mutually agree to wave this rule at any time.

There are also additional rules involving numbers which state that at least 5 offensive linemen must be wearing numbers from 50 to 79 at the snap of the ball, and eligible receivers must wear numbers from 1 to 49 or 80 to 99. Only numbers from 1 to 99 inclusive are legal numbers.

ENCROACHMENT

Any player who breaks the plane of the scrimmage line except the rule of the snapper to be over the football after the snapper has made his final adjustment of the ball will be charged with encroachment which is a 5 yard penalty. If a defensive player breaks the plane and returns to his side of the line of scrimmage before the snap of the ball there will be a 5 yard penalty administered. This rule is to prevent the defense from "unloading" on the offense.

COACH-PLAYER CONFERENCES

This year a coach may use phones, radios, or other electric communications devices during authorized coach-player conferences. Several coaches may talk to one player, but only one player may come to the sideline.

Michigan High School Football Coaches Association

APPLICATION FORM

CHECK ONE:

☐ MHSFCA ONLY - \$2.00

☐ JOINT—
MHSFCA-MHSCA - \$5.00

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS (street) _____

CITY _____ ZIP CODE _____

POSITION _____

HOME ADDRESS (street) _____

CITY _____ ZIP CODE _____

MEA REGION _____ PHONE _____

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACHES ASSN.

John Blackstock, Secretary-Treasurer
Bad Axe High School
Bad Axe, Michigan 48413

Bulk Rate
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 15
MHSFCA
Bad Axe, Mich.