

Good morning everyone! Just 2 more days without games!

I hope everyone has had the opportunity to work a scrimmage or fall games to work the rust off a bit. I have been getting questions about elbows to the head in certain case plays the last month or so. Time to review elbows to the head.....in 2012-13, the NFHS made elbows to the head a POE (point of emphasis). The PIAA also included this in the pre-season bulletin in 2012-13. The following is what appears in both:

a. Contact by an elbow below the shoulder of the defender by the ball handler which is not swung excessively.

Ruling: Either incidental contact or Player control foul.

b. Contact by an elbow swung excessively (faster than the torso) below the shoulder of the defender.

Ruling: Either an intentional foul (more likely to occur) OR flagrant technical foul, depending upon the severity of the act and if the official deems it violent, savage nature, etc.

c. Contact above the shoulders of the defender by ball handler when elbow is not swung excessively (faster than the torso).

Ruling: Either incidental contact, common foul, or intentional foul

d. Contact by a ball handler above shoulders of the defender when elbows are swung excessively

Ruling: Intentional or flagrant personal foul.

Examples of illegal contact above the shoulders and resulting penalties:

1. Contact with a stationary elbow may be incidental or a common foul.

2. An elbow in movement but not excessive should be an intentional foul.

3. A moving elbow that is excessive can be either an intentional foul or flagrant personal foul.

The tough part of this rule is most likely interpreting what a 'stationary' elbow is. This happens when the elbows make contact with an opponent but they are not moving *faster than the torso*. Stay with me here and try not to laugh too hard, but here is a way I think about it.....imagine a mannequin in a store front window that is rotating and has its elbow out (to show off the sleeve of the clothing). If by chance, a store customer got too close (without making contact) and the mannequin rotated and hit the customer in the head with its elbow, THAT is a stationary elbow.....the elbow was moving the same speed as the torso. IN THIS CASE, this follows case C and example 1 above. THIS will either be a common or intentional foul. Case C says the option is there for incidental contact, but THAT play would occur if the mannequin were NOT rotating, but standing like a statue and the customer ran into its elbow. We still have a stationary elbow, but the elbow was not moving whatsoever to cause the foul. If this WERE the 'elbow' responsibility, we might have players unsportingly running into elbows of defenders attempting to draw an intentional foul. Hopefully you haven't laughed too hard at this!

In addition, as with any potential hard or intentional foul, sometimes the non-calling official who might be a further distance from the play actually got a better look at what happened. If that official says to him/herself 'wow, that was an intentional foul,' PLEASE go to your partner who called the foul and offer information about what you saw. The last thing we want to do is go into the locker room and say "I really thought that was intentional' and we didn't go to our partner to offer the info. Believe me, we ALL want that help if/when it happens. Here is what we should do if we have info to offer....

Go to your partner BEFORE he/she reports the foul (run to him/her if you have to) and say "I have an elbow to the head, it is intentional," or what you actually saw. If your partner says he/she got a good look and will not go intentional then at least you offered. If he/she says thanks, we are upgrading it to intentional, then great there also. We are here to get it right. Let the calling official upgrade the foul. He/she would then turn towards the table and give an intentional foul signal. Remember that intentional ALWAYS result in 2 free throws for the offended player (unless the intentional was committed on a shooter behind the arc who missed the shot and we have 3 shots), then the ball will be put in play at the closest spot to where the foul occurred to the offended team.

In the clip today, we have an elbow to the head of a secondary defender. The primary official makes the call and it then goes to a monitor review since NCAA rules allow reviews for potential intentional fouls (call FF1 in NCAA lingo). In OUR GAME, the calling official would need help if he/she didn't see it. In addition, if a coach says "That elbow hit my player in the head," or something similar, go to your partner(s) and ask if he/she saw an elbow to the head. Remember also that any time we are conferencing with partner/partners, we MUST make sure that the players are either being monitored by us or we have sent them to their bench area so we can have the discussion. Elbows to the head could lead to more issues if we allow them to by not separating players.

Hopefully this has been a good review of elbows above the shoulders for all the veterans and for those officials new to this avocation, an important addition that must be taken care of. Just remember that with the issue of concussions in sports, we must take care of business when we should.

Take a look at the clip for today [here](#).

Have a great day today and read a rule or two before tomorrow!

Tim