

## Correction of Errors

Each official on the field is responsible for getting the call right. Aside from getting calls right, recognizing mistakes and taking immediate steps to correct them drastically increases the confidence that everybody has in the crew. There is a limit however. Multiple mistakes will eventually turn confidence into distrust. The lesson is simple: commit as few errors as possible and address mistakes as soon as possible. This article explains common mistakes that officiating crews make during games under NFHS rules, how to fix those mistakes, and recommended explanations to coaches and players to prevent confusion.

**Pre-Game:** Every interaction with coaches, players, and table personnel is an opportunity to increase or decrease trust. An officiating crew that confidently performs the necessary pre-game duties increases their currency of goodwill.

The worst thing you can do after a mistake is rush to restart play. Most mistakes are obvious, and if they are not obvious then everybody feels as if something is not quite right. When you know a mistake occurred the entire crew must slow down and ask the following: What happened? So what? Now what? Any situation can be corrected with this model.

- Blew the whistle and signaled goal while the ball was on the outside of the net.
  - **What happened?** Did not realize where the ball was, blew the whistle, and rushed to signal goal.
  - **So what?** An inadvertent whistle, and an incorrectly awarded a goal to Team A.
  - **Now what?** Ball was inside the crease at the time of the whistle. Award ball to Team B according to the rules.
- Pointed the wrong direction after the ball goes out of bounds.
  - Got turned around and pointed the wrong way by accident.
  - Both teams are confused and unsure about who gets possession.
  - Acknowledge the error to everybody and point in the correct direction.
- An inadvertent flag is thrown by the Trail official for offside on Team A who has possession. Team A scores during the flag down.
  - Trail commits an error and Lead only knows that a flag is down, not what the flag is for.
  - A goal by Team A was allowed when they were not permitted to score due to their penalty.
  - Admit the error to the coaches, award possession correctly, and tell the coaches where the restart will be.
- Incorrect score on the scoreboard.
  - The table staff put a goal on the scoreboard for the team that did not score by mistake.
  - People are now angry and confused.
  - At the next dead ball take an officials timeout. Inform the table of what the correct score is.
- Caused faceoff players to move by accident.
  - The official conducts the faceoff incorrectly, resulting in early movement by both players.
  - Team A thinks B1 moved early. Team B thinks A1 moved early. In reality, neither player is at fault.
  - State that the movement was due to the official, and not the players. Reface according to the rules.

- Started play with the incorrect number of players for a man-up/man-down situation.
  - The officials did not count before restarting play. Now Team A or Team B has too many men on the field.
  - Coach yells for a penalty.
  - Stop play. Acknowledge the counting error. Keep possession to the team entitled to possession.
  
- Table personnel released B1 from the penalty area early. Official did not hear the table release, thought B1 left early on his own and threw a flag. Ball went out of bounds.
  - Confusion after an earlier penalty report for a 1-minute illegal body check resulted in the table thinking it was a 30-second penalty. As a result they released B1 after 30-seconds.
  - Team B felt they were penalized unfairly. Team A believed the additional technical foul is warranted.
  - Discuss what happened with the table personnel. Wipe the flag thrown for releasing early as the table made the error, not the player. Put B1 in for the amount of time that remains on his 1-minute illegal body check penalty.

After officiating mistakes, explain what happened to both coaches and permit 20 seconds of substitution time so teams can get the right players on the field. The rules build in time for substitutions after officiating errors so that each team can process what happened and plan accordingly. If you restart play right away after explaining what happened neither coach has time to get the correct players on the field. Embrace this time and use it to your advantage. The coaches will be unhappy that a mistake happened, but they will be grateful that it was handled appropriately.

