

# 2023 Football Bulletin 4

## Rules, Revisions, and Interpretations



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## MERCY RULE

### Mercy Rule: Table 1-7-10, 3-1-2 and 3-1-3

The PIAA adopted 35 point "Mercy" rule is used upon completion of the first half of an interscholastic football game at any level of competition or anytime during the second half when a team gains a 35-point differential over its opponent, the clock shall be stopped only when an official's time-out is taken, a charged time-out is granted, a period ends or a score occurs. Once implemented, the mercy rule remains in effect, even if the differential becomes less than 35 points.

#### Examples:

1. Incomplete pass – clock continues to run.
2. Ball carrier goes out of bounds – clock continues to run.
3. First down – stop clock, set chains, start clock on ready-for-play.
4. Ball carrier makes first down then goes out of bounds – stop clock, set chains, start clock on ready-for-play.
5. After a free kick, a punt or any other change of possession – stop clock and start on ready-for-play.
6. After a score – stop clock, remains stopped during the try.
7. Kickoff – start clock when legally touched. If result is a touchback, start clock on ready-forplay.

Note: Nos. 1 and 2 above are the primary situations where the clock continues to run.

When does the clock restart? Generally, whenever it would if any of the stoppages occurred during regular game play.

1. After an official's time-out – on the ready-for play.
2. After a charged time-out – on the snap.
3. After the end of the third period – on the snap to start the fourth period or when a free kick is legally touched.
4. After a score – when the subsequent free kick is legally touched.

## BALL "TOWEL"

The ball dryer to the right is that of a "towel" and is legal to use on the sideline to dry a wet ball.

Remember, once the game ball(s) are approved by the game officials before the game, nothing should be applied to them with the exception of a towel to dry the ball if it is wet.



## PLAYS FOR REVIEW

**Play:**

In the last few seconds of a half, A1 completes a pass to A2 at B's 20-yard line. The ball is properly spotted, and the referee marks it ready for play and signals the game clock to start. In the rush and confusion to stop the game clock, A's snapper, and quarterback A1 are the only A players in legal position when the ball is snapped and legally "spiked" by A1. A foul for illegal formation occurs at the snap.

**RULING:** The "spike" is legal. Since the spike is legal, the only applicable foul is for illegal formation. The reason for the game clock stoppage was the incomplete forward pass; therefore, the game clock shall start on the snap. **COMMENT:** The determination by the referee as to whether or not the act was intended to illegally conserve time must be applied using Rule 3-4-6. (7-5-2 EXCEPTION)

**Play:**

The field-goal attempt: (a) goes directly over an upright; or (b) is clearly over the crossbar between the uprights. In (a) and (b), the ball is blown back by the wind so that it drops into B's end zone.

**RULING:** In (a), it is an unsuccessful attempt because the ball did not penetrate the plane of the goal between the inside of the uprights extended. It is a legal field goal in (b) and it doesn't matter if the ball comes back above or below the crossbar. (8-4-1c)

## TRAINING VIDEOS

Training Video 5: : <https://youtu.be/xNfYcepPijQ>

Training Video 6: <https://youtu.be/5WBWTQL1XYX>

