

HOW TO PREPARE FOR HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL EXAMS

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I. Before the test

A. Reading the rule book

1. Read only one rule at a time and no more than two rules per day
 - a. Exception: Rules 4 and 5 are both short and may be read in one sitting
2. Read the pages in the rule book first, followed immediately by the case book pages related to that rule
3. Re-read the rules using a hi-liter to mark the most important items, including all exceptions and rule changes, plus those statements that relate to play situations that seldom occur
 - a. Example: Non-player fouls and unfair acts
4. Read the "Football Penalty Enforcement" section and the "Comments on the Rules Revisions" section

B. Using old tests

1. After completing all reading as cited above, pull out both of last year's tests (Part I and Part II), cover the answers, and re-take the tests under closed-book conditions

C. Last-minute preparation

1. On the day or night before the test
 - a. Read rules 2 and 10 before taking the test (every question relates to one or both of these rules)
 - b. Scan the "Summary of Penalties" section, paying special attention to fouls that result in an automatic first down or a loss of down
2. An hour before the test
 - a. Read the summary of rule changes; this is a must, because all exams have at least five to 10 questions directly related to rule changes
 - b. Read the "Football Fundamentals" section; many of the statements on the test are written word-for-word from this section

II. During the test

A. Look for keys

1. Generally speaking, statements that use words like “must,” “always,” “only” or “shall” are usually false; statements with words such as “may,” “might” or “could” tend to be true
2. Look for specific clues, such as:
 - a. The down (pay special attention to plays involving 4th down; this is when loss-of-down fouls seem to occur)
 - b. Status of the ball (live ball fouls vs. dead ball fouls; also, plays where both teams foul and there is a change of possession involved and the “clean hands” principle applies)
 - c. Relationship to the line of scrimmage (behind the neutral zone or beyond the neutral zone)
 1. Example: On pass plays, it is very important to note whether the pass crossed the line of scrimmage, because pass interference cannot occur unless the ball crosses the line of scrimmage
 - d. Responsibility and force (safety or touchback)
 1. Example: A player kicks or bats a ball after it strikes the ground

B. Pace yourself

1. Avoid reading too fast; this is often why simple questions are answered incorrectly
2. If you can’t decide on a question, skip it and come back to it only after you’ve finished the remaining questions
3. If a test item is exceptionally difficult, it’s probably best to guess false, since most tests generally have more false answers than true ones
4. Double-check to see that your circles (T/F selections) match what you marked on your answer sheet

III. After the test

A. Learn from your mistakes

1. Look for patterns; often you’ll see a pattern develop as to the kind of questions you tend to miss, especially by rule number
 - a. On Federation tests, each group of questions has a heading identifying the source of the rule
 1. Examples: “Equipment” (Rule 1); “Inadvertent Whistle” (Rule 4)

B. Stay on top

1. Review! Many officials fail to refresh their rule knowledge once the season begins