



## Officiating and stat keeping -- a trade-off of sorts for the better!

I thought of a major trade-off worth pursuing in both the IWFL and WFA. I was surprised I didn't recognize and share this sooner. In the below discussion I'm assuming the IWFL and WFA have as a standard, six officials assigned for their 2009 games and a single unpaid volunteer or two situated in the press box to stat the game. If that's the case please read on.

### **The idea**

Use 5 officials (referees) rather than 6 in each game. Take the \$65-\$100 a team would normally pay the sixth official (I'm estimating the cost here based on when I was a high school ref in the 1990s) and use that money to pay a professional statistician or two to stat each game. The statistician will be from the same local school system that provides the man power to staff the concession stand and janitorial services for the home team's stadium.

Have the paid statistician(s) score the game using the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rulebook for yardage gained/lost according to what is defined as a pass and what is defined as a run, etc.

For those IWFL/WFA games played in states like Texas that do not use the NFHS rulebook, stat the games according to the NCAA rulebook (high schools in Texas use the NCAA rulebook).

**Are the NFHS/NCAA stat procedures identical? For example, does the NFHS and NCAA deduct yardage from the same passing or rushing category for the same play result like a QB sack?**

I don't know. It would be interesting to know the differences but it's also irrelevant because we are looking at the best case scenario to use. The point is the IWFL/WFA league administrators should add



up the NFHS and NCAA stats together as if they were scored the same. It's better to have differing formats that are consistent and professionally done as a paid position just like the officiating on the field than to leave that to open to inconsistent recording of games or worse yet, not at all.

## **What's wrong with having six officials and one or two volunteers in the press box scoring the stats?**

Small rostered teams who are hurting for volunteers to work while the game is taking place probably make scoring of their games a low priority and eliminate the task if not enough people are available.

If there's a need to have someone in the ticket booth collecting money while issuing tickets, and a need to have someone walking around the premises to assist with miscellaneous issues, the need to stat a game will get dropped.

## **What are the benefits of having consistent professional stats for a game?**

With stats professionally done, the writeup in the below fictitious example now becomes possible:

"Lisa 'air-attack' Spangler passed for over 150 yards as the San Diego Express defeated the Richmond Fireballs, 17-6. Richmond turned the ball over 3 times and failed to score in the red zone twice. Jennifer Evans sputtered in the second half for Richmond as she was 3 for 10 in the passing department and had two picks, with the last interception returned for a touchdown with 2:21 remaining in the game...."

Notice how with stats there's something tangible to say in a writeup? Add some action photos and a box score from those stats and you got something really good to sell to your sports fans!

## **Will the quality of officiating slip by reducing the crew to 5**



## officials?

Take a look at the offensive speed in these two videos involving Alter high school and their wishbone/passing attack offense:

<http://www.ohiohssports.com/news/article/-1379211968/video-steubenville-archbishop-alter-first-half-archive>

<http://www.ohiohssports.com/news/article/1885495683/video-steubenville-archbishop-alter-second-half-archive>

The 5 man crew is on the spot. As a matter of fact the OHSAA used a 5 man crew for all of the state tournament games. Do you see faster speed in the IWFL/WFA compared to this game to justify a sixth official? The five man crew has no problem keeping up with Alter's team speed and deep corner passing attack. This all comes out of a wishbone misdirection offense.

**We committed to six officials for this year. I don't know if we can tell the local referee association we only need 5 refs for our remaining home games.**

Obviously, the sixth official probably already has been committed for the 2009 season and it would be wrong ethically to back out of the deal right now. However, the IWFL and WFA could eliminate the sixth official and pay a statistician (or two) for 2010 to improve their respective leagues.

## What's the better scenario?

Do you want a 5 man crew combined with a paid and experienced high school football statistician in the press box that allows for a solid and tangible writeup afterward or ... would you prefer a 6 man crew with the job of recording games being optional, inconsistent, or not at all by a volunteer?