**Final Meeting This Wednesday** – Important meeting this Wednesday 1/24. This will be our final meeting of the year. The agenda will be: Attendance; The Bull; Voting for Four(4) New Board Members; Plays of the Week; Calibration; Instructional Video.

**Attendance and Tests** - Make sure you’ve passed both exams. Make up exams will be available on Wednesday. There is no makeup meeting this year. This is it so get it done! Also check the sign in sheets to make sure you’ve met the eight (8) meetings requirement. Please note your attendance at the position clinic and the banquet count as meetings. So you’d need to attend six(6) additional meetings. If you’re one short I will look to see if you attended an additional clinic and give you credit. If you’re seriously short of attendance, please email your request for a one-year waiver from requirements to me. I will forward to the Board for their consideration. Meeting these requirements keeps you eligible for the 2019 draft!

**Final Weekend of the Regular Season** – Some of us will end our season soon and I sincerely hope that the season has brought you some rewarding experiences, a few laughs, and some lasting memories. Maybe you’ve even made a few new friends along the way. The 2019 season will be here soon and we can do it all again! Don’t forget to go out and support our fellow officials as they work playoff games. Always a fun evening learning and critiquing.

**Final Games for the Teams and Players** – This is usually a challenging weekend of high school football to officiate. In many cases the teams are competing for league championships and/or playoff qualification or seeding. The intensity will be high, the stakes high, and the demands on accuracy high! Be prepared for this excitement and pressure. Have a great week of preparation, then go out with your crew and execute. Same can be said for teams that are wrapping up the season with no hope of going to the playoffs. Seniors will be playing hard and juniors will be stepping up to prepare for next year. Keep this all under control. Have a plan. Don’t be surprised by the excitement of these final games.

**Tempo** – We’ve done very well with this as a whole. We’ve completed our dead ball responsibilities, hustled to get the ball and chains ready for play and kept the game moving with accurately timed periods leading up to kick offs and the completion of time outs. Referees are no longer waiting for the box to be set, rather winding quickly as the box arrives. Get the teams out! Keep the pace moving and the kids will benefit in the quality of their play. Slowing the tempo will cause many unexpected negative consequences including poorer play and fewer opportunities for the kids. A brisk, consistent tempo will keep the teams focused and playing their best. Always hoping for fewer fouls!

**Pre-Game Conference** – Let’s do everything possible to conduct these two conferences near the start of the 30 minute warm up period. In the playoffs we ask crews to be out 45 minutes before kickoff and that gives us even more opportunity to conference with the coaches before they get involved in running team offense and defense. Start these as soon as you can.

**Pregame Warm-ups** - We’ve had several instances of team’s enthusiasm spilling over into unsportsmanlike conduct. Regarding the Haka – Working with the CIFSDS we ruled that if the act is done on the field before the game, it must be done between the 45 yard line and the end line, and it may not be directed toward the opposing team or their fans. Teams violating this policy should be given a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. Similarly, teams may not direct their enthusiasm at the opposing team by standing at mid-field shouting, pointing, jumping on the home school’s logo, etc. That also goes for individuals. All carry a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty which will be enforced on the kickoff. **To insure that the pre-game goes well I am directing all crews to be on the field 45-minutes before kickoff during the playoffs – 6:15 – adjust your pregame accordingly. Please have at least one crew member on the 50 yard line at all times.**

**Great Mechanics Helps to Sell Your Close Call** – We had an example of a critical 4th down play in which the team needed the close call to go their way in order to not lose the game. On this play at the sideline, the official was in perfect underneath position approximately 6-8 yards right down the sideline straddling the sideline. Ruling was feet down but the ball moved as the player fell to the ground attempting to complete the catch. When reviewing the call, there was no video evidence as the Hudl video is not that clear or close up, but the mechanics of the official makes it clear that he was in perfect position to rule on the play. Ruling on the field stands…Great job!

**Injured Player and Official’s Time Out** – As much as we want to error on the side of safety, we need to be cautious on declaring a player injured and taking an official’s time out for an apparently injured player. Let’s always give the player a chance to “recover” and continue to participate, especially if the play clock is not affected. We have the luxury of time to allow the athlete to recover. Now, if the player ultimately cannot get up and continue, we take the official’s time out when the play clock is affected. We all know that if the player is seriously injured we stop it immediately, as we do when a player exhibits signs, symptoms, and behaviors consistent with a concussion. Otherwise, take your time and be patient in stopping the clock. We don’t want to decide to have a mildly injured player out for an important down and the coach complain that the player was OK.

**From the Observers** – On behalf of Don Carey, Gene Beck, Andy Castagnola, Joe Greene, John Downing, Mark Lindsay, Kevin Rathbun, John Isham and myself we want to thank each and every crew for welcoming us every Friday. We had a great year and the crews were professional and genuinely interested in constructive feedback. Without that professional attitude, our work would be meaningless. Good job… now work to get even better!

**Video** – We had our absolute best year of video review. With the addition of the Coastal and Pacific Conferences crews had access to their game video almost every week. Honest evaluation of our calls and judgments are so important to our individual and collective improvement. And don’t forget to review your spots and your mechanics. It all adds up to the best performance possible.