

EFAF Officiating Newsletter

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Editor's Note

By Frank Kristensen



Yes, I know. April 1 has come and gone. I'm late. The Newsletter is late. However, when you consider why it is late, I think you may just forgive me. This past weekend, Frank Rasmussen and I went to Hamburg to see an NFLE game. Find the complete coverage on page 3-4.

The Danish season is right around the corner and the EFAF season has already begun, so here is a suggestion for all EFAF officials. When you go to an EFAF game, talk to your referee and get somebody on the crew to write 10 lines about your game for our Newsletter. Anybody can write 10 lines. It doesn't have to be fine journalism, but just a little bit about what happened during or around the game. All of your colleagues in EFAF would love to read about it. Referees, makes this happen!! Come on!!

Here is a suggestion for all EFAF officials.

By the way, the above is 10 lines. That is all it takes.

Enjoy the Newsletter.

News from Peter Springwald

Hi out there in Europe - I got the needed EFL-badges today - so please, everybody who is assigned to an Euro Bowl game and does not have an EFL-badge yet, please answer quickly and I will take care of sending you the needed badge - one for each - remember you have to wear it at every Euro Bowl game - best regards Peter

The Book Corner

By Thomas Hofbauer,

Close Calls

Confessions of a NFL Referee

Written by Norman Schachter, 1981

ISBN 0-688-00794-5



If you try to find a book from Norm Schachter you will first of all get his book about English language called „Basic English Review: English the easy way“. I must admit that I never read that one. It just gives me the feeling that this man wrote the book on his own and it proves that I do not spend money on everything an official ever published. That helps when arguing with my wife!

Norm Schachter started officiating in 1954. According to a player he was the second best official in the league (with all others tied for first). He had a great career with working Superbowls I, V and X. He did not succeed as an actor in a movie as all the scenes were cut out.

That helps when arguing with my wife!

The book is full of great sayings and stories from the all time greatest coaches and players of the old days. The chapters have names like Halas, Lombardi, Madden, Landry, Brown and Shula. Each chapter tells personal experiences with those men. Norm really shows the „different ways how a coach shows that he is displeased“.

22 years of officiating. It started when flags were white and 5 minute warnings given and all the time there was a gun on the field to end the quarters.

Is there a penalty for thinking?

He was the one who worked out the job responsibilities for the 6th official when he was added to the crews in 1965, as well as the rules test for all officials (to make sure he knew all

the answers).

„It is open season on a referees' judgement but never on his integrity.“ He admits mistakes on the field like watching the game instead of the key. He was not perfect and he has the heart to write it down and tell it to the rest of the world.

„A crew is only as good as it's weakest official and you are only as good as your last call.“

On the back cover is a list with 16 items titled „What every Professional Football Referee Should Remember“. Lots of them are found in today's mechanics and other handouts passed around.

The book contains mostly funny stories collected over the years. Problems about judgement are mentioned regularly and the careful reader will find lots of hints how to handle game situations. The art of handling coaches and players during games should not be copied by others as I think that would be dangerous, especially in Europe.

„Ref, is there a penalty for thinking?“

„No way!“

„Well, I think you are a“

That one went without a penalty and I like the attitude to let players win with a great idea.

Join me next months when we change to Baseball and have a look into: „You're out and you're ugly too“ by Durwood Merrill.

Thomas Hofbauer

A little trip to Hamburg

By Frank Kristensen, Newsletter editor



I had to get out of work early, to make everything work out, but luckily I have a very understanding boss. Frank and I left Copenhagen at 1PM Friday afternoon. Destination Hamburg, Germany. Destination NFL Europe.

Due to some construction underway, we were delayed a little bit, and when we got to the ferry, the ticket lady said that the ferry was already full, and we would have to wait for another 40 minutes for the next ferry, but when we drove up to the stop sign, the guy waived us through and we were allowed on the ferry at the very last minute. Maybe they sensed where we were going, and they didn't want to stand in our way. ☺

Getting close to Hamburg, we started looking at the different maps that we had brought, and we actually had two conflicting directions, but it turned out to be very easy to find. I was able to recognize it from the Autobahn, and from there, it was just three right turns and there we were.

**Destination Hamburg, Germany.
Destination NFL Europe.**

We get into the lobby and run into Jim D. The first thing he asks me is if I had brought along my gear, as one of the officials was stuck in the States, and even though I knew he was kidding, it still took me a few seconds to work out that he was just messing with me.

Part of it actually turned out to be true. Scott Novak's plain from Boston to Frankfurt had been cancelled, so he hadn't arrived yet. More on that later.

After getting checked in, we meet up with the rest of the crew, and we eat dinner in the hotel restaurant. The weather really didn't encourage us to go anywhere. Lots and lots of rain.

Just like last year with Walt Anderson's crew, this was a great group of guys. The SJ, Bob McElwee, had even brought his entire family of three kids and wife. It was good to meet all of them.

Saturday morning we had breakfast with the crew and Jim D. Maybe people were still affected by the Jet-lag or maybe people were getting into their pre-game mode. Getting their game faces on. I certainly sensed a difference in the mood from last night's dinner to this morning's breakfast. The game was definitely getting closer.

The referee, Jerome Boger, had decided to have a pre-game meeting at the hotel at 10 AM, so we all met in the lobby to find out which meeting room we were going to. Just before 10, Scott arrived from the airport. He looked a little tired. After flying from Denver to Boston, his flight to Frankfurt had been cancelled and they had lost one of his bags, so even though Lufthansa had put him up for the night, he had to spend a lot of time and energy to locate his bag.

Jim offered a piece of advice that we could easily use in EFAF.

The pre-game meeting, now with a complete crew, and Jim D was from 10 AM to 12.15. First we looked a training tape called NFL Points of Emphasis from 2005 and Jim and Jerome talked about the basics. Basically the same topics

as we would talk about at an EFAF game.

Everybody came from different conferences, so it was good to talk through the basics to make sure that everybody was on the same page.

Jim spent quite a bit of time trying to reassure the crew that "it's just a football game". He offered a piece of advice that we could easily use in EFAF. When national officials first make it to EFAF, they might be nervous, but just remember what brought you to EFAF, and keep that up. The speed might be different from what you are used to, but it is still the same game and the players are still going to commit the same fouls.

After the pre-game, we had a few hours to kill before the drive to the stadium, so a handful of us, went down to this little diner for lunch. We even managed to get there and back without getting rained on. After that it was back to the hotel for about 90 minutes of relaxation.

The waiting is also a big part of an EFAF game. On the one hand, it is annoying, but on the other hand it is part of what defines international games to me, and therefore part of the experience. I think I would miss it, if there were no waiting around at all.

We get into the stadium without too much hassle. Security is tight for "observers" Frank and I without IDs. Luckily, Jim manages to reuse some of the ID's and get inside.

There is no regular pre-game at the stadium. There just isn't any time.

There are meetings with security, coaches, clock operators, chain crew, ball boys, and TV producers. About an hour before the game the crew goes to the field for the teams' warm ups. After about 5 minutes, they run into a huge shower. It is going to be a wet night. Frank and I are up high. We followed Jim up into the press section, where the view is excellent and the rain can't reach us. We are ready for some football.

During the coin toss, the coin lands on the grass. However, because of the condition of the field, the coin lands upright, so they have to do it over. We thought that was a little funny.

The game gets underway, and I focus on the deep officials. Of course. I try to work on my pre-snap routine by counting the defense (Jim actually made me do it the entire game) and talking myself through the formations and the ICT zone and so on. In some ways I believe you can actually learn and improve as an official, just by watching a game.

The crew looked good. "My" guys – the deep guys – looked really good. Good cushions, good pinches, and good hustle. Hamburg builds a first half lead of 17-0.

In the second half Berlin comes back and ends up tying the game, forcing OT. Those of you, who know me well enough, can probably guess that I had a big smile on my face. I love me some OT.

For the first time since 1992, an NFLE game ended in a tie. We can't complain that we didn't get out money's worth.

After the game, we went back to the hotel. We picked up some pizza and some hot wings at the diner and met at the meeting room for the post game. First all the forms were filled in. Each official has a form to fill in with his own fouls and the referee fills in additional forms for the crew and the game. It is quite a lot. After that, we looked at the TV tape, and Jim went over all the situations where something interesting happened. For an observer, this is an interesting part of the experience. Getting to sit with these great officials and talk about these plays was an absolute pleasure. We finished at around 1.15 AM and, naturally, went straight to bed.

For the first time since 1992, an NFLE game ended in a tie.

The next morning, Jim left early for Cologne, so the crew looked at the coach's tapes by them selves. This also was very interesting, as it showed different angles to all the plays and showed parts of the game not shown on TV. This was especially beneficial for the deep guys, who don't get that much TV exposure.

All in all, the trip was just as exciting, educational and fun as I expected it to be. I can only repeat myself in that if you ever get a chance to go, do it. If you don't get a chance, make it happen for yourself. It will be worth it.

By the Book

In each of the following you are given a situation and at least two possible answers. You are to decide which answer or answers are correct. Note: In kicking situations, K is the kicking team, R the receiving team. For answers, click [here](#).

1. Third and 10 at team A's 20 yardline. Eligible receiver A1 runs a sideline pattern. He steps out of bounds at team A's 34 yardline and leaps when a pass is thrown in his direction. While airborne over out-of-bounds territory, A1 bats the ball to A2, who catches the ball at team A's 30 yardline. A2 advances to team A's 40 yardline, where he is downed.

- Legal play under any circumstance.
- Legal play only because A1 batted the ball backward.
- A1 is guilty of illegal touching.
- A1 is guilty of illegal participation.
- The ball should have been blown dead when A1 touched it.

2. Fourth and 17 for team K from its own 13 yardline. K1's punt is high and short and hits the ground at team K's 23 yardline. After the ball hits the ground, R2 gives a fair catch signal. R2 attempts to recover the loose ball, but muffs it and it rolls into team K's end zone, where R3 falls on it.

- Team R scores a touchdown.
- Team R scores a safety.
- R2 has fouled; the penalty is enforced from the previous spot.
- R2 has fouled; the penalty is enforced using post-scrimmage kick enforcement.
- R2 has fouled; the penalty is enforced on the try.

- f. R2 has fouled; the penalty is enforced on the succeeding kickoff. Team K will kick off from its own 25 yardline.
- g. R2 has fouled; the penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul.

3. Second and 10 for team A from team B's 37 yardline. A1's legal forward pass is intercepted by B2 at his own three yardline. B2's momentum takes him into his own end zone. An official blows an inadvertent whistle.

- a. Team A scores a safety.
- b. Team B is awarded a TB.
- c. Team B will begin a new series at its own three yardline.
- d. B2 should ignore the whistle and continue playing.

4. Third and 27 for team A from its own 11 yardline. QB A1 is under center when he takes the snap and throws a backward pass to FB A2. Immediately upon receiving the pass, A2 gets off a quick kick. B3, who was blitzing on the play, takes three running steps and roughly knocks A2 to the ground.

- a. No foul because team A was not in a scrimmage-kick formation.
- b. No foul because A2 is, by definition, a back and not a kicker.
- c. No foul because it wasn't reasonably certain a kick would be made.
- d. B3 is guilty of running into the kicker.
- e. B3 is guilty of roughing the kicker.

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Websites of interest

By Frank Kristensen, Newsletter editor

Max is the man!!! He has managed to set up a chat room for us. Go to <http://lnx.huddle.org/chatphp> and register. This is a chat room exclusively for us officials, and here is the deal:

We meet online every **Wednesday at 8 PM standard European time**. We use this forum to talk about rules, mechanics, philosophy or anything else we want. We use situations from our own games or we use quizzes either our own or from the US.

We also use this chat room to prepare for our upcoming EFAF games. The only limit is our own imaginations.

Also, if you have any questions regarding the quizzes in this Newsletter, mention that in the chat, and we'll get a good discussion going.

Danish Clinic

By Frank Kristensen, Newsletter editor



A couple of weeks ago, we held our fourth annual national officiating clinic for the top officials in Denmark. It starts Friday evening and ends Sunday afternoon. Each year we try to have a general theme and this year it was the Referee. In that connection we had invited one of the best referees in Europe, Einar Bolstad of Norway.

We had different presentations geared towards the referee position. Some were actual presentations like Einar's introduction of his pre-snap routine and others were group work like our practical exercise in referee's signals.

Saturday afternoon we played a flag football tournament and held our traditional flag-and-beanbag-throwing-competition which was supervised, officiated, and won by our own Frank Rasmussen. Rumours had it that the contest was rigged but nobody was able to prove anything. ;-)

It is a weekend where we combine learning about rules and mechanics with getting to know each other better.

Next year our focus will be on the deep officials. That will be a very interesting clinic in my opinion.

Q and A

By Frank Kristensen, Newsletter editor



If you have a play with several flags, and the subsequent communication reveals that one flag/foul must be enforced/declined and the other flag must be waived, do you announce this?

The main concern is clarity and avoiding confusion. If both the flags could be for the foul that is eventually administered, then no additional explanation is needed nor wanted. If a coach is observant enough to question why there were two flags on the same foul, the can explain the reason when time permits.

On the other hand, if the two flags could not possibly be for the same foul (for example one flag from the R and another flag from a deep official) then additional explanation is most likely needed and wanted.

In short, explain to clarify and leave it be if it will only confuse.

The Frank Study Guide

By Frank Kristensen, Newsletter editor

I started including pre-snap lists for different positions from my Study Guide, and then, for some reason, I stopped.

From now on, this will be a regular section in the Newsletter. It will either be a pre-snap list of some sort, or it will be a discussion of some sort, like the one below, which shows a so-called mnemonic device.

In the English language, a patio is defined as a flat hard area outside, and usually behind, a house where people can sit. This according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. In football, it can be used to remember situations, where the period is extended for an untimed down.

Penalty accepted.

Touchdown.

Inadvertent whistle.

Offsetting penalties.

However, the period is not extended if the accepted penalty is a UNC or a DB PF.

Practical stuff

If you get a new email address, please let me know, so I can update my file. That will also ensure that you always receive the Newsletter and other pieces of information from EFAF.

The below is a list of the email addresses that did not work when I sent out the last issue.

alexarn"@pstore1.utanet.at

By the book - Answers

1: c. (7-3-4)

2: a. (6-5-3)

3: c. (4-1-2—b-1)

4: e. (9-1-3-a-1)