



PANTS AND KNEE PADS

A very significant rule change for 2018 is in **Rule 1-4-4-d**, regarding the knee pads. The rule was changed in 2017 to take effect in 2018: **the pants and knee pads must cover the knees**. TASO will generally follow guidance from College Football Officiating, LLC (CFO) regarding implementing this change.

The CFO has said: “There has been a strong effort to emphasize this change—with teams, coaches, and conferences, as well as with the coordinators and officials. A poster illustrating legal and illegal equipment has been sent to every team. Coordinators have discussed this with coaches and teams, with the media, and at clinics and workshops. Because of the focused attention to the change and the long lead-time for it to take effect, no one should be surprised by this new rule. **Our job is to enforce the rule.** “

Here is the process to be followed in Texas middle school and high school football games, as prescribed by rule:

- If a player tries to enter the game with knee pads in pants that do not cover the knees and/or with no knee pads covering the knees, he must not be allowed on the field. Furthermore, if the player is wearing basketball or volleyball knee pads, the pants must, at a minimum, touch those pads and the pads must be covering the knees.
- If a play is about to begin and an official sees a player who has no knee pads covering the knee, and which cannot be covered simply by the player adjusting the pants legs and pads, he should be sent from the field. The game and play clock will not be stopped unless the ball is just about to become alive. If the clocks have to be stopped to prevent the ball from coming alive, the player must be made to leave the field and will miss a down. The player does not need to miss a down if the team takes a charged timeout, but he may not be allowed to re-enter the game until his equipment is legal.
- If after a play is over an official sees a player who played the down with uncovered knees, he must be sent from the game for at least one down and may not return until the equipment is legal. The player does not need to miss a down if the team takes a charged timeout, but he may not be allowed to re-enter the game until his equipment is legal.

We expect this rule will soon become a non-issue if we all are consistent in our application of the rule and we start with the first game of the season.