



## **'HIDEOUT" PLAYS – A NEW APPROACH**

This memo will address a “hideout” play that was recently attempted in Texas high school football and which was also run at least in two different NCAA games. While we are very familiar with such plays that are conducted in conjunction with obvious substitutions, this new approach attempts to perform the trickery by taking advantage of an apparent loophole in the rules. Until that loophole is addressed, the interpretation below will be the official TASO interpretation for such plays.

The play is run as the second play in a two-play sequence. On the first play, the ball is snapped at or near one hash. Team A will execute a run play taking the ball even further out towards or past that hash so that the ball is spotted for the next play at the hash. On that 1<sup>st</sup> play, Team A will send a back in motion towards the hash away from them. As all the action is near the hash where the ball was snapped, the defense legitimately turns its attention from the motion back. That back just continues jogging towards the sideline as he would if he were to be leaving the game. He eventually gets to his sideline and stops short. He may even face his team area instead of lining up in a “normal” position on the line or in the backfield. On the 2<sup>d</sup> play, that player, who has managed to avoid detection by Team B, will run straight down the field while a pass is thrown to him.

Rule 9-2-2-b prohibits using substitutions, simulated substitutions, or the substitution process to deceive an opponent. We are interpreting this rule to include plays like the one above where the opponent may legitimately believe the player is leaving, or has left, the field. The penalty for this foul is a live ball unsportsmanlike conduct resulting in a 15-yard penalty from the previous spot. The foul is charged as a “team foul” and not assessed to any individual player or coach, nor does it count as one of the two unsportsmanlike conducts before a mandatory disqualification of any player or coach.

We realize rule 7-1-3-b-1 simply says Team A players who participated in the previous down must have been between the 9-yard marks after the previous down and before the next snap. In this trick play, the team may be able to comply with that by having the motion back linger just inside the number until he hears the whistle ending play. This trick play violates the spirit and intent of that rule. If a team violates this rule also, then the crew may rightfully shut play down at the snap and enforce a 5 yard penalty for illegal procedure , avoiding the more serious 15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

If you have any questions regarding this or any other rule, please email [football@taso.org](mailto:football@taso.org)