NJSIAA - 2020

(Mercy Rule Change)

But NJSIAA Assistant Director Jack DuBois did present to the Executive Committee several other rule changes for 2020.

Perhaps the biggest includes a change to the mercy rule.  In the past, when a team goes ahead by 35 points or more in the second half, a running clock would be automatically used.  A normal clock would return once the margin got under 35 points.

But a new rule for 2020 would reduce the threshold to 33 points.  The thinking is that since kickers aren’t generally as reliable on the high school level, one or two missed PATs would result in the mercy rule not kicking in until the margin is 39 points or more.

In addition, the old rule restored a “normal” clock once the margin got under 35 points.  The new rule requires the margin to drop under 25 points to be restored, still reachable with a single touchdown and two point conversion.

**Game Management – Running Clock Rule**

For all levels of play, during both the Regular Season, Championship Playoffs and Regional Crossover games, if the score reaches 33 points or more in the 2nd half, the clock will stop only for a score, time out, penalty or injury. If the score differential drops below 25 points, normal timing rules will again be in effect.

Source: NJSIAA 2021 Football Regulations – Page 3