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How will instant replay work in Alabama HS football? Answering 20 questions

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2 Comments

The Alabama High School Athletic Association approved instant replay for high school football games beginning this fall.

Calls can only be overturned if there's indisputable video evidence that the call was missed.

AHSAA officials said the state's football officials want instant replay, as a tool to make sure they get calls right.

How will it work? Let's look at 20 questions regarding Alabama's new rules for high school football:



Photo from AHSAA

1) When does instant replay start?

This fall. The AHSAA has been granted permission from the National Federation to implement instant replay as an experiment for up to three seasons. The AHSAA will gather information and data which could be used to determine whether instant replay should become part of high school football nationwide.





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2) Will all AHSAA regular-season and playoff games have instant replay in 2018?

No. Implementing instant replay is optional, and each school will decide if it wants to purchase equipment for replay. However, if a home team has the equipment and capability to use instant replay, it will be used. If the visiting team has the equipment available and it can be used with the home team's video equipment, replay will be used.

How will it work?

- **If call is reversed**, the officials will correct the call and play situation as necessary by the reversal.
- **If call is not reversed**, team will lose that challenge and be charged a time out. If a team doesn't have a time out remaining, the team will be assessed a delay of game penalty.
- If a coach requests a challenge that doesn't meet the criteria for reviewable plays, the team will be assessed a time out and a delay of game penalty if out of time outs.
- Decision of replay official is **final**. Protests are not allowed.

Photo from AHSAA

3) How are plays reviewed?

The AHSAA has partnered with DVsport, which coordinates instant replay for the SEC and many other major sports organizations. DVsport's system plugs into a school's existing video-taping system. Additional cameras can be purchased from DVsport, including pylon cameras, that expand the instant-replay capabilities at an individual stadium.

Officials will use a tablet, such as an iPad, to review the video.



4) Will this make games last longer?

Probably. Each replay is expected to add two to four minutes to the game. That means 10 to 20 minutes will likely be added to the average game time of two hours and 15 minutes.

AHSAA Director of Officials Mark Jones said he expects the addition of instant replay to add no more than 30 minutes to a game's duration.

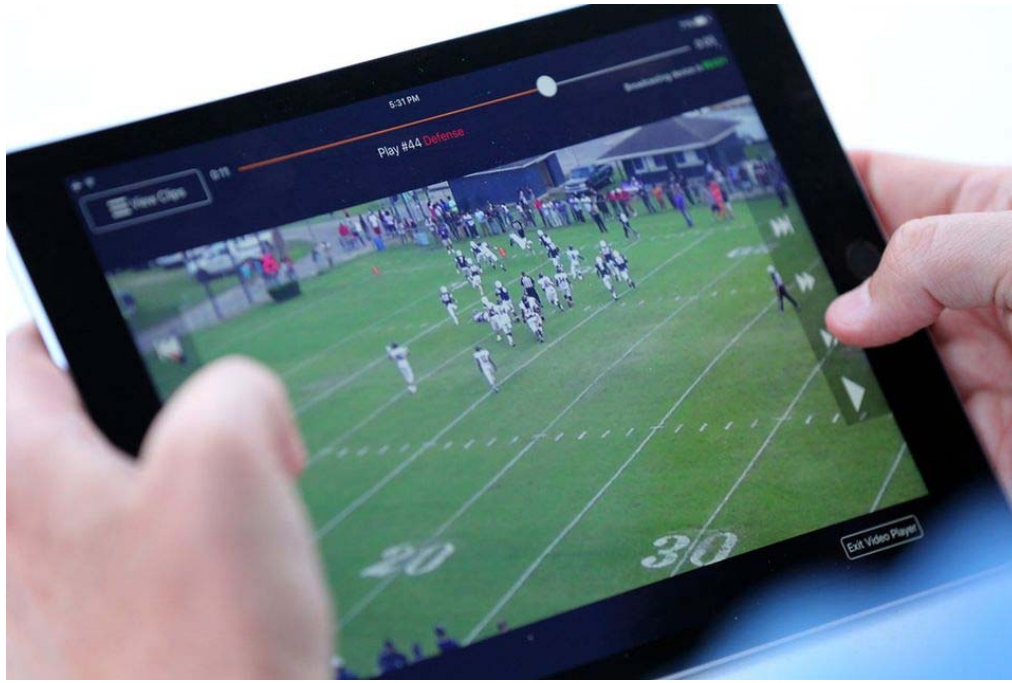


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5) Who reviews the call?

There is no additional replay official or booth review. The referee and one other game official who was not directly involved with the play under review will determine whether the call should be overturned. DVsport's system has a sideline kiosk that allows the review to be done on the field.





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6) What will officials see on the replay?

Officials can play back multiple camera angles, including traditional sideline and end-zone coaching cameras, depending on how many cameras a school has. Additional cameras, including pylon cameras, will be available for purchase from DVsport.



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7) What plays are reviewable?

All plays, except those involving penalties, are reviewable. That means plays that often draw controversy, such as whether a player stepped out of bounds or if a player crossed the plane of the goal line, will be reviewable.

So, if a flag is throw, or not thrown, that can't be reviewed. All others can.

In addition, timing errors may be challenged in venues that have a visible clock embedded in the video replay. Also, time may be corrected when a call is reversed on the last play of any quarter.

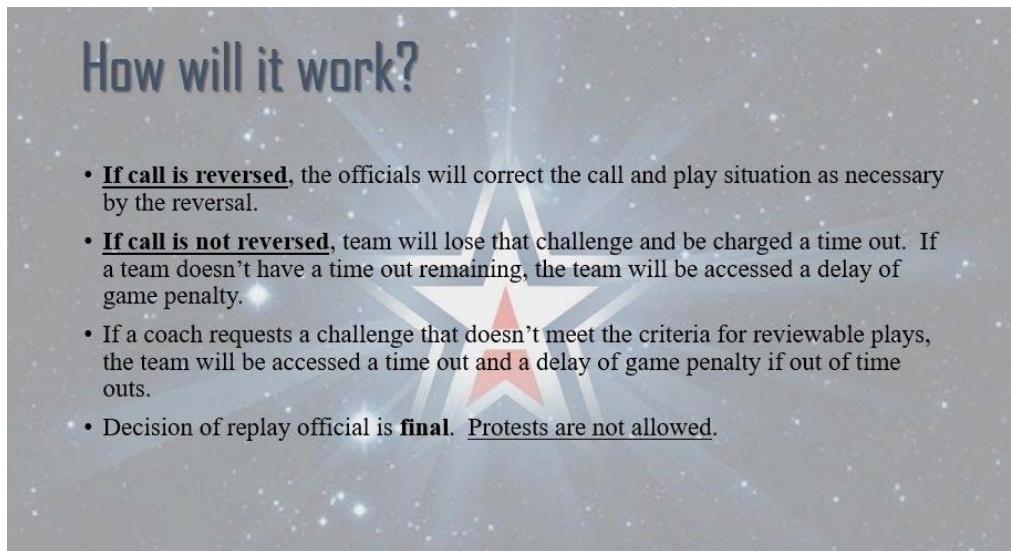


Photo from AHSAA

8) Are there any exceptions to the prohibition of reviewing penalties?

Yes. There are:

- 1) Determining whether a player threw a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage, regardless of whether a flag was thrown
- 2) Determine whether a team had more than 11 players participate during a down, regardless of whether a flag was thrown
- 3) Determine if a foul results in disqualification, such as targeting, spearing, blindside block or fighting.

Also, when instant replay is initiated (a challenge by either team) the replay official has the autonomy to correct or enforce any unsportsmanlike acts.





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9) Are there any automatic reviews?

Yes, but only in state championship games. In the AHSAA's seven titles games, the last play of either half or any overtime possession will be reviewed for any error or misapplication of a rule, but only if the play could have a bearing on the outcome of the contest.



Photo from AHSAA

10) What equipment is used?

The AHSAA has partnered with DVsport, and the company's system plugs into a school's current video-taping system. That means if a school uses one camera or multiple cameras, that's what will be used for that game.

DVsport, based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, handles instant replay for many major sports organizations.



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