

Excellent advice on what to do and not to do with whistles.

1. Work with a finger whistle rather than a lanyard one. You can use the lanyard one as a back-up. It takes getting used to, but worth the practice. If you simply can't use a finger whistle, then be especially mindful of the following..
2. Never work with the whistle "in your mouth."
3. Never blow outside your area.
4. When you see the runner down, make sure you also see the ball. If you do not see both, then do not blow the whistle.
5. For the downfield guys especially; count "one-thousand-one," before blowing the whistle on fair catches. The signal the punt returner gives puts the defense on notice to avoid contact, not the official's whistle. Same holds true on "catches" in the end zone. Make sure it is a "catch" before blowing the whistle and signaling. Remember "touchdowns are forever."
6. If you do not blow the whistle, then do not signal anything either, as an inadvertent signal will also "kill the play" and get you in just as much trouble.
7. If despite these caveats, you succumb to the "plague," and have an inadvertent whistle, own up to it immediately and adjudicate it properly and get the game moving...

Finally no one; rookie, seasoned, experienced official, etc; is immune from the "Inadvertent Whistle Plague." So be prepared and concentrate on every play. Remember, "slow whistles" are preferred, and "no whistles" can be explained, but "inadvertent whistles" are suicide; so don't bring them with you!