

2011-12 PLAY INTERPRETATIONS
BULLETIN NO. 2

Action by the Snapper

1. With Team A in a shotgun formation the snapper has one or both hands on the ball. He moves one hand forward with the arm outstretched, pulls it back and then snaps the ball.

RULING: Dead-ball foul; Five-yard penalty. This could be ruled encroachment or false start, depending on the manner in which the snapper moves his arm. If the movement is quick or jerky then it should be ruled a false start. If the movement is measured and deliberate it is a foul for encroachment. While by touching the ball the snapper will legally have a part of his body *in* the neutral zone, by rule he may not have a part of his body *beyond* the neutral zone. (2-18-1, 7-1-2-b-3 and -4b, 7-1-3-a-1)

Formations

2. Tight end A88 is on the right end of the line of scrimmage in a two-point stance with his elbows on his knees. Flanker A44 covers him up by setting up on the line of scrimmage to A88's far right, so that A88 is no longer on the end of the line. As the quarterback is calling signals A88 smoothly leaves his position on the right side of the line, trots behind the quarterback, and settles into a three-point stance on the line of scrimmage as the left end.

RULING: Legal change of position. A88 is not restricted even though he is not on the end of the line because his hand(s) is not on the ground or below his knees. (2-27-4, 7-1-2-b)

Blocking Below The Waist

3. Flanker A33 is positioned in the backfield outside the tight end to the left of the formation. After all Team A players have been set for one second A33 starts in motion to his right and at the snap he is behind the left offensive tackle. The quarterback takes the snap and hands the ball to the deep back, A22, who follows A33 on a sweep around right end. They turn up field and then A33 blocks at the knees from the front against a Team B linebacker. His block is directed toward the left sideline.

RULING: Legal block. A33's adjacent sideline is to his left and his block is directed toward his adjacent sideline. (9-1-6)

Blocking Below The Waist

4. Back A44 is lined up directly behind the right guard and is stationary at the snap. The quarterback takes the snap and follows A44 who leads the sweep around right end. A44 blocks linebacker B55 at the knees with the block directed toward the left sideline.

RULING: Legal block. A44 is stationary inside the tackle box at the snap so he is allowed to block below the waist anywhere on the field in any direction. (9-1-6)

Three-and-One Penalty Enforcement

5. Third and 1 at the A-25. Ball carrier A33 carries the ball to the A-30 where he fumbles. While the ball is loose A55 clips at the A-40. Back A22 recovers the fumble at the A-38 and carries to the A-45 where he is tackled.

RULING: A33's run is the related run for the clipping foul, so the basic spot is the end of that run, which is the A-30. Since the foul is beyond the basic spot, the penalty is enforced at the basic spot, the A-30, so the 15-yard penalty takes the ball back to the A-15 where it will be third and 11.

The temptation might be to enforce the penalty from the spot of the foul (the A-40) since this is behind the end of the run by A22 after the fumble recovery. However, this run is unrelated to the clipping foul. (2-25-8-b, 2-30-4, 10-2-2-d-1)

Dead-Ball Fouls On The Try

6 After the ball has been declared ready for play on the try at the three-yard line Team A commits a false start. Ignoring the whistle, defensive tackle B77 charges across the line and knocks down A66, drawing a flag for a dead-ball personal foul.

RULING: Both penalties are enforced in the order of occurrence. The try will be at the B-4. (8-3-3-d, 8-3-5)

Potential Kick-Catch Interference

7. Punt receiver B22 is at the B-30 awaiting the punt as it makes its downward flight and his teammate B88 is in front of him at the B-34. Down field to cover the kick, A44 blocks B88 into B22 just as the ball reaches him. The ball hits B22 in the shoulder and bounces away. Team A recovers at the B-25.

RULING: Team A's ball, first and 10 at the B-25. This is not kick-catch interference. The action by A44 is against B88 who is not in position to catch the kick, and not against B22. Thus A44 is not deemed to have interfered with B22's opportunity to catch the ball. B22's touching of the ball allows Team A to recover legally. (6-4-1-b)

Potential Forced Touching

8. As a punt rolls along the ground A44 blocks B33 into the ball, which bounces away and strikes B48 in the leg. Team A recovers.

RULING: Team A's ball, first and 10 at the spot of recovery. Although the touching by B33 is forced, that by B48 is not. B48's touching of the ball allows Team A to recover legally. (6-3-4-a)

More Than Eleven Players on Defense

9. Team B plays the down with 12 players but the officials do not discover the twelfth player until the down is over or almost over.

RULING: Live-ball foul for substitution infraction. Five-yard penalty at the previous spot. (6-5-3-c)

More Than Eleven Players on Defense

10. Team B has 12 players on the field but they are not in any sense “in the formation” as the team tries to make adjustments. The twelfth player is racing to get off the field and is near the sideline when the ball is snapped.

RULING: Live-ball foul for illegal substitution. Five-yard penalty at the previous spot. Treating this as a dead-ball foul could disadvantage the offense and they must be allowed the option to decline the penalty. (6-5-3)

Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul As Time Expires

11. The score is tied in the fourth quarter as Team A snaps the ball with the game clock reading 0:08. B44 intercepts a pass and races down the sideline toward the goal line with no Team A player able to catch him. As B44 reaches the A-15 Team B squad members come off the bench and onto the field to follow the play in celebration, but they do not interfere with any players or the officials. When B44 crosses the goal line the game clock reads 0:00.

RULING: The touchdown counts because non-players commit the unsportsmanlike conduct foul. The game is over and Team B wins by six points. The foul would in principle be treated as a dead-ball foul but since the game is over there is no enforcement of the penalty.

The referee makes a brief announcement that because the unsportsmanlike conduct foul was committed by the bench, by rule the touchdown counts, the penalty is not enforced and the game is over. (8-3-2-a, 9-2-1-a-Penalty, 10-2-5-c)

Rogers Redding
Secretary-Rules Editor

September 23, 2011