

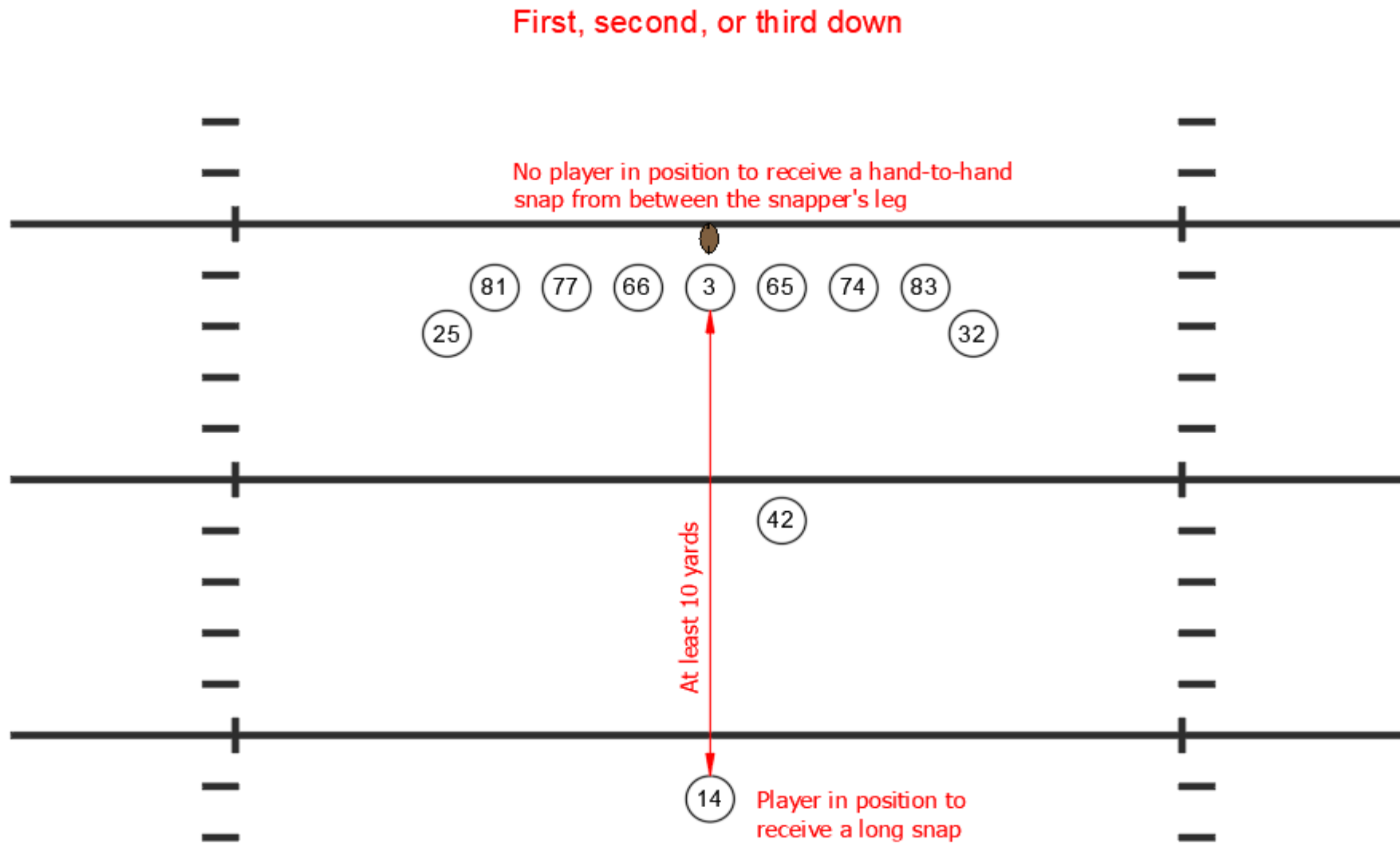
NUMBERING
EXCEPTIONS ON
SCRIMMAGE KICKS

Team K does not have to be in scrimmage kick formation to punt, attempt a field goal, or attempt a kick try. However, it may take advantage of the numbering exception only if it is a legal kick formation. This is a strategy used by coaches to get better coverage on kicks. In theory, a player wearing a back, end, or wide receiver number can get downfield faster than a player wearing a lineman number.

Ordinarily, a team snapping the ball must have at least five players on its line of scrimmage at the snap numbered 50-79 (Rule 7-2-5b). But there are exceptions:

Rule 7-2-5b Exceptions state:

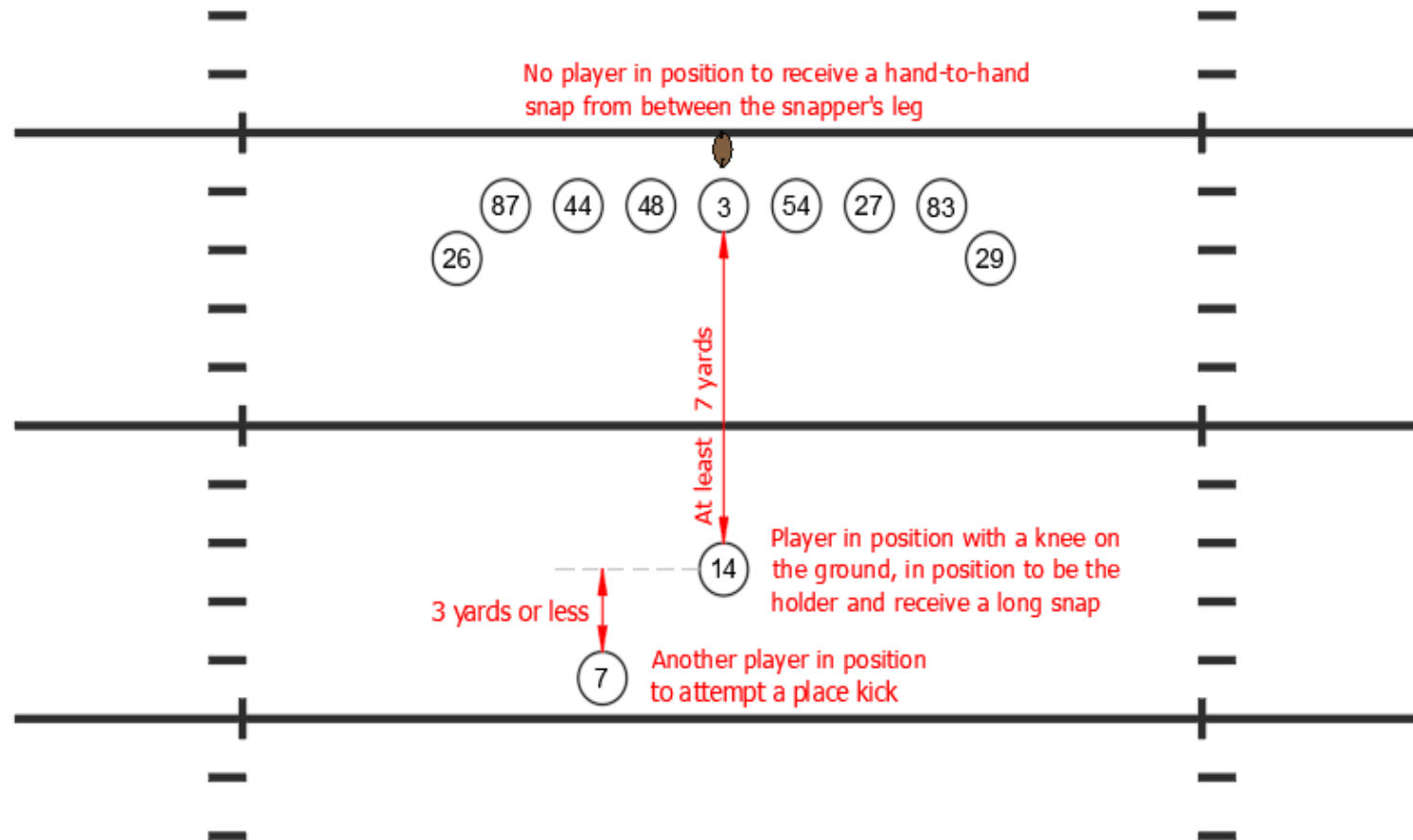
1. On first, second, or third down, when A sets or shifts into a scrimmage-kick formation as in 2-14-2a, the snapper may be a player numbered 0 to 49 or 80 to 99. If Team A has the snapper in the game under this exception, Team A shall have four players wearing numbers 50-79 on its line of scrimmage.



The rule continues; The snapper in the game under this exception must be between the ends and is an ineligible forward-pass receiver during that down unless the pass is touched by B (7-5-6b). *The snapper does not have to be in the middle of the formation, but he must be positioned between the ends.

-
2. On fourth down or during a kick try, when A sets or shifts into a scrimmage-kick formation, any A player numbered 0 to 49 or 80-99 may take the position of any A player numbered 50 to 79. A player in the game under this exception must assume an initial position on his line of scrimmage between the ends and he remains an ineligible forward-pass receiver during that down unless the pass is touched by B (7-5-6b).

Fourth down or Try



It's important to understand the numbering exception so officials can determine if there are any fouls on the scrimmage kick play. Let's look at a couple of plays:

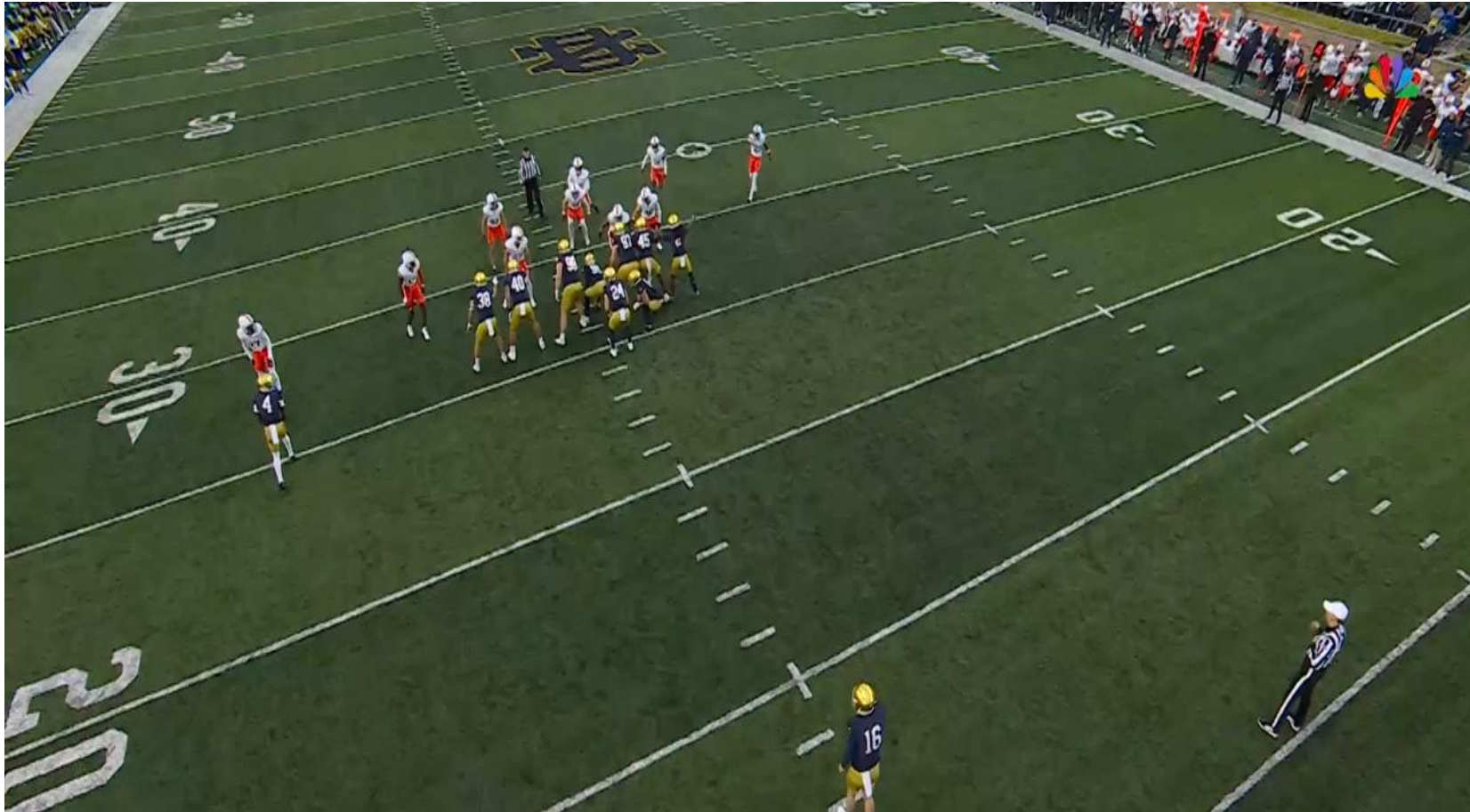


In this play Team K was not in a legal kick formation as the punter was not 10 yards behind the LOS. The good news is that there was no foul on the play because Team K did not use the numbering exception and there were five linemen numbered 50-79 on their LOS.



Again, Team K was not in legal formation as the punter was not 10 yards behind the LOS. No foul also as Team K did not use the numbering exception and they had at least 5 players on their LOS numbered 50-79.

In the previous two plays, had Team K tried to employ the numbering exception, there would have been a foul. All fouls regarding improper numbering result in a five-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot.



Although that was a college game, let's assume it was a high school game. It was 4th and 6 for Team K. Is this play legal? Team K is in a scrimmage kick formation with a player 10 or more yards behind the line of scrimmage and in position to receive a long snap. Team K is taking advantage of the numbering exception and those players numbered 0-49 or 80-99 are between the ends and on the line of scrimmage. Legal? The answer is NO. The player numbered 24 is in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from the center. That would be a five-yard penalty (illegal formation) enforced from the previous spot.

So, who is responsible for making sure the numbering exception is used properly. Per the game official's manual, the Umpire is responsible for checking the numbering exception. However, the whole crew can help. The Referee can see the numbers of the players on the line of scrimmage as they are checking eligible receivers in the backfield well as making sure Team K is in a legal scrimmage kick formation. The Referee also needs to be aware of the kicker and the holder's numbers. The wings should identify the eligible receivers on their respective sides of the formation before the play. The same is true for the back judge on a field goal attempt or try.

If the entire crew is doing their job and working together then this shouldn't happen to you:

At the end of the half or at the end of the game, Team A may run out their field goal team for an attempt. Remember, if its 1st, 2nd, or 3rd down the ONLY numbering exception they can have is the snapper.

It is my understanding that this was a playoff game, and it was the last play of the game. There were no flags thrown on the play.

