

TO: All Football Officials

It is time for each of us to take on the critical responsibility of accurate penalty enforcement during the course of every football game. As an individual member of a crew, are you prepared to know the correct enforcement of each penalty that you call? If you were required to take the crew test by yourself, would you be ready for the penalty enforcement questions? Many decisions during the game involve subjective human judgment which will result in disagreement from time to time, but penalty enforcement is black and white and every official is equally responsible for the accuracy of these decisions that will impact the game. Please use this document to review penalty enforcement and prepare yourself properly!!!

Every foul occurs while the ball is live OR occurs during a dead-ball period. It is also possible for a foul to occur while the ball is live, BUT the enforcement of that foul is treated as a dead-ball foul. It is most critical that you know the difference and make the appropriate determination when you throw the flag.

Most fouls that are treated as a live-ball foul are part of a Loose Ball Play OR part of a Running Play.

LOOSE BALL PLAY: Action that begins with a legal snap or a legal free kick and then includes:

1. a legal kick while the ball is in kick status;
2. a legal forward pass while the ball is in pass status;
3. a backward pass by A or a fumble by A or an illegal kick by A that occurs in or behind the neutral zone prior to any change of possession. A loose ball play can end while the play is still in progress.

RUNNING PLAY: Any action that begins with a legal snap and does not involve any of the action described in a Loose Ball Play OR any action that begins while the ball is still live and follows a loose ball play. Please note that it is clearly possible to have both one loose ball play plus a running play(s) that all occur during the same down. If this occurs, the loose ball play MUST precede the running play. It is NOT possible to have a running play followed by a loose ball play during the same down.

Every foul that occurs during a game has a BASIC SPOT associated with that foul that is used to determine the spot from where the penalty will actually be enforced. Please note that the basic spot associated with a foul and the spot where the penalty is enforced may NOT be the same. It is critical to know the difference. When the foul occurred, where the foul occurred, what was happening when the foul occurred, and the actual foul that occurred are all critical factors that determine the enforcement spot.

POSSIBLE ENFORCEMENT SPOTS: 1. Previous spot (the spot where the previous play began); 2. Spot of the actual foul (the yard line where the foul occurred); 3. Succeeding spot (the spot where the next play is to begin); 4. Spot where the related run ends (the yard line where the ball becomes dead in player possession or where the runner loses player possession); 5. PSK spot (the yard line where the legal kick ends) The 20 yard line could be the PSK spot if the result of the kick is a touchback.

There are several fouls that can occur prior to the ball becoming live and we must blow the whistle to prevent the play from starting. These include: 1. False Start; 2. Illegal snap; 3. Delay of game; 4. Encroachment; 5. Free Kick infraction; 6. Illegal substitution. Each of these penalties would be enforced from the succeeding spot (where the play was about to begin).

There are several fouls that become fouls at the moment that the ball is legally snapped. This is the case because the problem can be avoided or fixed prior to the snap. These include: 1. Illegal formation; 2. Illegal numbering; 3. Illegal motion; 4. Illegal shift; 5. Illegal substitution; 6. Illegal Participation. Each of these penalties would be enforced from the previous spot (where the play began). Please note that the ball does remain live in these situations.

ALL-BUT-ONE PENALTY ENFORCEMENT: Many but not all fouls that occur during a loose ball play or during a running play are penalized according to the all-but-one principle. It is critical to know that there are exceptions to this principle. The basic spot that is used to determine the enforcement spot for a foul that occurs during a loose ball play is the previous spot. This penalty is enforced from the previous spot if and when the defense commits the foul behind or beyond the previous spot or the offense commits the foul beyond the previous spot. If the offense commits the foul behind the previous spot, the penalty is then enforced from the actual spot of the foul. The basic spot that is used to determine the enforcement spot for a foul that occurs during a running play is the end of the related run. This penalty is enforced from the end of the related run if and when the defense commits the foul behind or beyond the end of the related run or the offense commits the foul beyond the end of the related run. If the offense commits the foul behind the end of the related run, the penalty is then enforced from the actual spot of the foul.

POST-SCRIMMAGE KICK ENFORCEMENT: This enforcement procedure applies if and only if the following occur: 1. A foul by Team R occurs beyond the expanded neutral zone; 2. This Team R foul occurs during the time period beginning with a legal snap until the kick ends; 3. The down included a legal scrimmage kick (except for a kick try or a successful field goal) that crossed the expanded neutral zone and Team R was in possession of the ball at the end of the down. This penalty is then enforced from the end of the kick if Team R's foul occurred beyond the end of the kick and this penalty is enforced from the actual spot of the foul if it occurred behind the end of the kick. Remember that the end of the kick is the 20 yard line when the result of the kick is a touchback. Team R will retain possession of the ball.

CRITICAL STATEMENTS CONCERNING FOULS AND PENALTY ENFORCEMENT:

- > Any non-player foul or any unsportsmanlike foul is always enforced the same as any dead-ball foul from the succeeding spot regardless of when the foul actually occurred.
- > A dead-ball foul and a live-ball foul do NOT offset each other but dead-ball fouls by each team can now offset each other. Any penalty may be declined. The offended team always has the option to accept the result of the play.
- > Multiple fouls are two or more live-ball fouls committed by the same team during the same live-ball action and their opponent may only accept one foul to be enforced.
- > Double fouls are live-ball fouls committed by both teams that may very well offset, but that is not automatic as there are some exceptions.
- > Dead-ball fouls that occur simultaneously by opponents or the order of the fouls cannot be determined are to be disregarded and they cancel each other out.

> Remember to enforce all penalties BEFORE the chain is set. If all penalties are enforced AND the chain is then set AND the next ready-for-play whistle is sounded, it would then be possible for a subsequent dead-ball foul at that point to create a down and distance of more than 1st and 10.

> The only fouls in our Federation Rule Book that call for an Automatic First Down are Roughing the Passer, Roughing the Kicker or Holder of a Scrimmage Kick, or Roughing the Snapper if and only if the offense is in a scrimmage-kick formation at the snap.

> The only fouls in our Federation Rule Book that call for a Loss of Down are an Illegal Forward Pass, an Illegal Forward Handoff, or the Illegal Touching of a Forward Pass.

> CLEAN HANDS EXCEPTION: If both teams foul during a down AND there is a change of possession during the down, the team that has possession of the ball at the end of the down may keep the football if and only if they did not foul prior to gaining final possession AND if and only if they decline their opponent's foul. Their opponent still has the option of accepting or declining the foul committed by the team in final possession. Otherwise the two fouls will offset and the down is replayed.

> PSK CLEAN HANDS EXCEPTION: If both teams foul during a scrimmage kick down and the foul by Team R involves PSK enforcement, R may keep the ball by declining Team K's foul. Team K still has the option to accept or decline Team R's foul. Otherwise the two fouls will offset and the down is replayed.

> ADDITIONAL FOULS WITH UNIQUE SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT RULES: You are encouraged to study Rule 10-5-1 very carefully for those fouls that have their own special enforcement rules that are unique to that foul only. They include: 1. A free kick out of bounds untouched by R; 2. Kick-catching interference; 3. A foul by the opponent of the scoring team during a successful try; 4. A foul by the opponent of the scoring team during a successful field goal; 5. Fouls that occur during or after a touchdown scoring play; 6. Roughing the passer; 7. Roughing the kicker or holder of a scrimmage kick; 8. Roughing the snapper if and when the offense is in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap.

CRITICAL STATEMENTS THAT INVOLVE SCORING PLAYS:

> If the opponent fouls during a TOUCHDOWN scoring play, the team that scores may keep the 6 points AND have the penalty enforced on the try or the subsequent kickoff unless the foul occurred prior to a change of possession. This could include a dead-ball foul before the ready-for-play signal on the try. It must also be noted that the scoring team may have committed a foul that involves dead-ball enforcement and their opponent then has the same option to penalize them on the try or on the subsequent kickoff.

> If the opponent fouls during a successful FIELD GOAL, the scoring team may keep the 3 points AND have the penalty enforced at the succeeding spot OR they may take their 3 points off the board and have the penalty enforced from the basic spot with the down to be replayed.

> If the opponent fouls during a successful TRY, the scoring team may keep the point(s) and have the penalty enforced at the succeeding spot OR they may take their point(s) off the board and have the penalty enforced from the basic spot with the try to be replayed.