

**2003  
OFFICIAL  
PLAYING RULES  
OF THE  
NATIONAL  
FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

Paul Tagliabue, Commissioner

Edited by Larry Upson,

Director of Officiating Operations  
Produced by NFL Creative

# PREFACE

***This edition of the Official Playing Rules of the National Football League contains all current rules governing the playing of professional football that are in effect for the 2003 NFL season. Member clubs of the League may amend the rules from time to time, pursuant to the applicable voting procedures of the NFL Constitution and Bylaws.***

Any intra-League dispute or call for interpretation in connection with these rules will be decided by the Commissioner of the League, whose ruling will be final.

Because interconference games are played throughout the preseason, regular season, and postseason in the NFL, all rules contained in this book apply uniformly to both the American and National Football Conferences.

At many places in the text there are approved rulings which serve to supplement and illustrate the basic language of the rules. Each is headed by an abbreviation, followed by a number (e.g. "A.R. 32.0"). The letter "A" in an approved ruling indicates the team that puts the ball in play, and its opponents are designated by the letter "B." Whenever a team is in possession of the ball, it is the offense, and at such time its opponent is the defense. Yard lines and players are indicated by numerals. Thus, for example: "A.R. 50.1 Third-and-10 on A30. During a run prior to an intended pass by quarterback A1, defensive player B1 holds flanker A2 on the A45..."

Where the word "illegal" appears in this rule book, it is an institutional term of art pertaining strictly to actions that violate NFL playing rules. It is not meant to connote illegality under any public law or the rules or regulations of any other organization.

The word "flagrant," when used here to describe an action by a player, is meant to indicate the degree of a violation of the rules—usually a personal foul or unnecessary roughness—is extremely objectionable and conspicuous. "Flagrant" in these rules does not necessarily imply malice on the part of the fouling player or an intention to injure an opponent.

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# Field Markings

1. The playing field will be rimmed by a solid white border six feet wide along the end lines and sidelines. There will be an additional broken yellow line nine feet farther outside this border along each sideline in the non-bench areas, and such broken line will be continued at an angle from each 30-yard line and pass behind the bench area (all benches a minimum of 30 feet back from the sidelines) at a distance of six feet. In each end zone, this broken yellow line is six feet from the solid white border. These yellow broken lines are to be eight inches wide and two feet long with a space of one foot between them.  
  
In addition, within each bench area, a solid yellow line six feet behind the solid border will delineate a special area for coaches, behind which all players, except one player who is charting the game, must remain. Furthermore, a broken white line four inches wide and four feet long with a space of two-foot intervals will be marked three feet inside the nine-foot restriction line on the sideline, extending to meet the existing yellow broken line six feet behind both end zones and at each television box outside the bench area.
2. All lines are to be four inches wide, with the exception of the goal line and yellow lines, which are to be eight inches wide. Tolerance of line widths is plus one-fourth inch.
3. All line work is to be laid out to dimensions shown on the plan with a tolerance of plus one-fourth inch. All lines are straight.
4. All boundary lines, goal lines, and marked yard lines are to be continuous lines.
5. The four intersections of goal lines and sidelines must be marked at inside corners of the end zone and the goal line by pylons. Pylons must be placed at inside edges of white lines and should not touch the surface of the actual playing field itself.
6. All lines are to be marked with a material that is not injurious to eyes or skin.
7. No benches or rigid fixtures should be nearer than 10 yards from the sidelines. If space permits, they may be further back.
8. Player benches can be situated anywhere between respective 35-yard lines. Where possible, a continuation of the dotted yellow line is to extend from the 30-yard lines to a point six feet behind the player benches thereby enclosing this area.
9. A white arrow is to be placed on the ground adjacent to the top portion of each number (with the exception of the 50) with the point formed by the two longer sides pointing toward the goal line. The two longer sides measure 36 inches each, while the crossfield side measures 18 inches. The 18-inch crossfield side is to start 15 inches below the top, and 6 inches from the goalward edge of each outer number (except the 50).
10. The location of the inbounds lines is 70'9" for professional football, 60'0" for college football. On fields used primarily by the NFL, the professional inbounds lines should be 4 inches wide by 2 feet long. Alternate college lines, if they are to be included, should be 4 inches wide by 1 foot long.
11. Care must be exercised in any end zone marking, decoration, or club identification at the 50-yard line, that said marks or decorations do not in any way cause confusion as to delineation of goal lines, sidelines, and end lines. Such markings or decorations must be approved by the Commissioner.

# RULE 1 THE FIELD

## Section 1 Dimensions

Playing Lines  
Field of Play

The game shall be played upon a rectangular field, 360 feet in length and 160 feet in width. The lines at each end of the field are termed End Lines. Those on each side are termed Sidelines. Goal Lines shall be established in the field 10 yards from and parallel to each end line. The area bounded by goal lines and sidelines is known as the Field of Play. The areas bounded by goal lines, end lines, and sidelines are known as the End Zones.

The areas bounded by goal lines and lines parallel to, and 70 feet 9 inches inbounds, from each sideline, are known as the Side Zones. The lines parallel to sidelines are termed Inbound Lines. The end lines and the sidelines are also termed Boundary Lines.

The playing field will be rimmed by a solid white border a minimum of 6 feet wide along the end lines and sidelines. An additional broken limit line 6 feet further outside this border is to encompass the playing field in the non-bench areas, and such broken line will be continued at an angle from each 32-yard line and pass behind the bench areas (all benches a minimum 30 feet back from the sidelines). In addition, within each bench area, a yellow line 6 feet behind the solid white border will delineate a special area for coaches, behind which all players, except one player charting the game, must remain. If a club's solid white border is a minimum of 12 feet wide, there is no requirement that the broken restraining line also be added in the non-bench areas. However, the appropriate yellow line described above must be clearly marked within the bench areas.

In special circumstances (for example, an artificial surface in a multi-purpose stadium) and subject to prior approval from the League Office, a club may omit the 6-foot solid white border during the preseason or later period while football overlaps with another sport, and substitute a single 4-inch white line at what normally would be the outer limit of the solid border (6 feet from the sidelines).

## Section 2 Markings

Line Markings

At intervals of 5 yards, yard lines (3-41-2) parallel to the goal lines shall be marked in the field of play. *These lines are to stop 8 inches short of the 6-foot solid border.* The 4-inch wide yard lines are to be extended 4 inches beyond the white 6-foot border along the sidelines. Each of these lines shall be intersected at right angles by short lines 70 feet, 9 inches long (23 yards, 1 foot, 9 inches) in from each side to indicate inbounds lines.

Inbound Lines

In line with the Inbound Lines there shall be marks at 1-yard

intervals between each distance of 5 yards for the full length of the field. These lines are to begin 8 inches from the 6-foot solid border and are to measure 2 feet in length.

Bottoms of numbers indicating yard lines in multiples of 10 must be placed beginning 12 yards in from each sideline. These are to be 2 yards in length.

Two yards from the middle of each goal line and parallel to it, there shall be marked in the Field of Play, lines 1 yard in length.

All boundary lines, goal lines, and marked lines are to be continuous lines. These, and any other specified markings, must be in white, and there shall be no exceptions without authorization of the Commissioner. Field numerals must also be white.

Care must be exercised in any end-zone marking or decoration or club identification at the 50-yard line that said marking or decorations do not in any way cause confusion as to delineation of goal lines, sidelines, and end lines. Such markings or decorations must be approved by the Commissioner.

The four intersections of goal lines and sidelines must be marked, at inside corners, by pylons mounted on flexible shafts. In addition, two such pylons shall be placed on each end line (four in all).

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

#### **Goal Line**

All measurements are to be made from the inside edges of the line marking the boundary lines. Each goal line marking is to be in its end zone so that the edge of the line toward the field of play (actual goal line) is 30 feet from the inside edge of the end line. Each goal line is to be eight inches wide.

All lines are to be marked with a material that is not injurious to eyes or skin. It is desirable that the yard line markers be flexible in order to prevent injury. No benches or rigid fixtures should be nearer than 10 yards from sidelines.

In league parks where ground rules are necessary, because of fixed conditions that can not be changed, they will be made by the Commissioner. Otherwise they will be made by mutual agreement of the two coaches. If they cannot agree, the referee is the final authority after consulting his crew.

### **Section 3 Goal**

#### **Crossbar**

In the plane of each end line there shall be a centrally placed horizontal Crossbar 18 feet 6 inches in length, the top face of which is 10 feet above the ground. The goal is the **vertical plane** extending indefinitely above the crossbar and between the lines indicated by the outer edges of the goal posts.

#### **Goal Posts**

All goal posts will be the single-standard type, offset from the end line and bright gold in color. The uprights will extend 30 feet above the crossbar and will be no less than 3 inches and no more than 4

inches in diameter. An orange-colored ribbon 4 inches by 42 inches is to be attached to the top of each post.

*Note: Goal posts must be padded in a manner prescribed by the league.*

#### **Section 4 Players' Benches**

Players' Benches At the option of the home team, both the players' benches may be located on the same side of the field. In such a case, the end of each bench shall start at the 45-yard line and continue towards the adjacent goal line.

*Note: When both benches are so located, chain crew and linesmen are to operate during entire game on opposite side to benches. See 15-4-1.*

#### **Section 5 Chain Crew and Ball Boys**

Chain Crew and Ball Boys Members of the chain crew and the ball boys must be uniformly identifiable as specified by the Commissioner. White shirts are to be worn by members of the chain crew.

#### **Section 6 Sideline Markers**

Sideline Markers The home club must provide and use the standard set of sideline markers that have been approved by the Commissioner.



# RULE 2 THE BALL

## Section 1

### Ball Dimensions

The Ball must be a "Wilson," hand selected, bearing the signature of the Commissioner of the league, Paul Tagliabue.

The ball shall be made up of an inflated (12 1/2 to 13 1/2 pounds) rubber bladder enclosed in a pebble grained, leather case (natural tan color) without corrugations of any kind. It shall have the form of a prolate spheroid and the size and weight shall be: long axis, 11 to 11 1/4 inches; long circumference, 28 to 28 1/2 inches; short circumference, 21 to 21 1/4 inches; weight, 14 to 15 ounces.

The Referee shall be the sole judge as to whether all balls offered for play comply with these specifications.

## Section 2

### Ball Supply

The home club shall have 24 balls available (domed stadium or outdoor stadium) for testing with a pressure gauge by the Referee two hours prior to the starting time of the game to meet with league requirements. Twelve (12) new footballs, sealed in a special box and shipped by the manufacturer, will be opened in the officials' locker room two hours prior to the starting time of the game. These balls are to be specially marked by the Referee and used exclusively for the kicking game.

A pump is to be furnished by the home club, and balls shall remain with and be returned to the ball attendant prior to the start of the game by the Referee.

In the event a home team ball does not conform to specifications, or its supply is exhausted, the Referee shall secure a proper ball from visitors and, failing that, use the best available ball. Any such circumstances must be reported to the Commissioner.

In case of rain or a wet, muddy, or slippery field, a playable ball shall be used at the request of the offensive team's center. The Game Clock shall not stop for such action (unless undue delay occurs).

*Note: It is the responsibility of the home team to furnish playable balls at all times by attendants from either side of the playing field.*

# RULE 3 DEFINITIONS

## Section 1 Approved Ruling (A.R.)

Approved Ruling An Approved Ruling (A.R.) is an official decision on a given statement of facts and serves to illustrate the intent, application, or amplification of a rule. Supplemental notes are often used for the same purpose (3-32).

Technical Terms Technical Terms are such terms that have a fixed and exact meaning throughout the code. Because of their alphabetical arrangement in Rule 3, certain ones are used prior to being defined. In such cases they are accented only the first time they are used.

## Section 2 Ball in Play, Dead Ball

Ball in Play **Article 1** The Ball is in Play (or Live Ball) when it is:

- (a) legally free kicked (6-1-1 and 2), or
- (b) legally snapped (7-3-1).

It continues in play until the down ends (3-7-1; 7-4-1).

Dead Ball **Article 2** A Dead Ball is one that is not in play. The time period during which the ball is dead is Between Downs. This includes the interval during all time outs (including intermission) and from the time the ball becomes dead until it is legally put in play.

Loose Ball **Article 3** A Loose Ball is a live ball that is not in player possession, i.e., any kick, pass or fumble. A loose ball that has not yet struck the ground is In Flight. A loose ball (either during or after flight) is considered in possession of team (offense) whose player kicked, passed, or fumbled. It ends when a player secures possession or when down ends if that is before such possession. (For exception, see 9-1-17-Exc. 2).

Fumble **Article 4** A Fumble is any act, other than a pass or legal kick, which results in loss of player possession. The term Fumble always implies possession. (8-4-2-Exc. 1).

*Note: If a player pretends to fumble and causes the ball to go forward, it is a forward pass and may be illegal (8-1-1-Pen. a, c).*

**A.R. 3.1** While runner A1 is in possession, defensive player B1 grabs the ball away from him.

**Ruling:** Fumble.

**A.R. 3.2** While runner A1 is in possession, defensive player B1 bats or kicks the ball away from him.

**Ruling:** A foul during a fumble. Kicking a ball in player possession is a foul (12-1-7).

Muff

**Article 5** A Muff is the **touching** of the ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain **possession** of a loose ball.

*Note: Any ball intentionally **muffed** forward is a **bat** and may be a **foul**. (3-2-5-g; 12-1-6; 9-1-10-Exc.; 3-14-3-Note).*

Touching the Ball

Touching the Ball refers to any contact. Ordinarily there is no distinction between a player touching the ball with his hands or any part of his body being touched by it except as specifically provided for (9-1-10-Exc., 3-14-3-Note).

*Note: The result of the touching is sometimes influenced by the intent or the location.*

Touching Free Kick

(a) See 6-2-1 and 4 for touching a free kick.

Intent or Location of Touching

(b) See 6-3-1-Exc. for touching a free kick before it goes **out of bounds** between the goal lines.

Ineligible Player Touching a Pass

(c) See 8-1-7 for **ineligible offensive player** touching a forward pass **on, behind, or beyond** the line.

Pushed Into a Kick

(d) See 9-1-6, 7, 8 for touching a scrimmage kick on or behind the line, and also 9-1-10 for being pushed into a kick by an opponent.

Touching Kick During Attempted Field Goal

(e) See 11-5-1-b for touching a kick during an attempted **field goal**.

Simultaneous Touching

(f) Simultaneous touching by two opponents of a fumble, pass, or kick is treated under their respective sections.

Bat or Punch

(g) A Bat or Punch is the intentional striking of the ball with hand, fist, elbow, or forearm. See 12-1-6.

Player Inbounds

**Article 6** A player (5-2-1-S.N.4) is inbounds when he first touches both feet or any other part of his body, other than his hands, to the ground within the boundary lines (1-1). See (3-20-1) for a player out of bounds.

*Note: Unless otherwise stated in the Rules, a player is deemed to be inbounds.*

Player Possession

**Article 7** A player (5-2-1-S.N. 4; 3-2-6) is in possession when he is in firm grip and control of the ball inbounds (See 3-2-3).

To gain possession of a loose ball (3-2-3) that has been caught, intercepted, or recovered, a player must have complete control of the ball and have both feet completely on the ground inbounds or any other part of his body, other than his hands, on the ground inbounds. If the player loses the ball while simultaneously touching both feet or any other part of his body to the ground or if there is any doubt that the acts were simultaneous, there is no possession. This rule applies in the field of play and in the end zone.

The terms catch, intercept, recover, advance, and fumble denote player possession (as distinguished from touching or muffing).

**Catch** A catch is made when a player inbounds secures possession of a pass, kick, or fumble in flight (See 3-20; 8-1-6-S.N. 5).

*Note: It is a catch if in the process of attempting to catch the ball, a player secures control of the ball prior to the ball touching the ground and that control is maintained after the ball has touched the ground.*

**Interception** An interception is made when a pass (forward or backward) is caught by an opponent of the passer.

**Recover** The term recover indicates securing possession of a loose ball by either the offense or defense after it has touched the ground.

*Note 1: If there is any question by the covering official(s) as to whether a forward pass is complete, intercepted, or incomplete, it always will be ruled incomplete.*

*Note 2: Recovery as used in (3-1-4) does not imply advance, unless so stated.*

*Note 3: If a player would have caught, intercepted, or recovered a ball inbounds, but was forced out of bounds, player possession would be granted (8-1-6-S.N. 6).*

### **Section 3 Blocking**

**Legal Block** During a block by an offensive player, the following constitute legal actions:

(a) Contact can be made by the head, shoulders, hands and/or outer surface of the forearm or any other part on or inside the opponent's frame.

(b) Hands (open or closed) can be thrust forward initially to contact an opponent on or outside the opponent's frame, but the blocker immediately must work to bring his hands on and inside the opponent's frame.

(c) As the play develops, a blocker is permitted to work for and maintain position on an opponent as long as he does not push from behind or clip illegally.

#### Illegal Block

During a block by an offensive player, the following constitute illegal actions:

(a) Use of hands or arms to grab, twist, or tackle an opponent.

(b) If a blocker, after the initial forward thrust of his hands, does not immediately work to bring his hands on and inside the opponent's frame.

(c) Use of hands or arms to push an opponent from behind that affects his movement, unless in close line play.

(d) Hands cannot be thrust forward above the frame (opponent's body below the neck that is presented to the blocker) to contact an opponent on the neck, face, or head.

#### Blocking Notes

*Note 1: If there is potential for offensive holding and the opponent being blocked is tackling the runner behind the line of scrimmage at or near the spot of the potential hold, offensive holding will not be called as the holding has not had an effect on the play.*

*Note 2: If there is potential for offensive holding and at that time the runner is being tackled by another defensive player behind the line of scrimmage, offensive holding will not be called as the holding has not had an effect on the play.*

*Note 3: If there is potential for offensive holding when there is no line of scrimmage (i.e., punt return or kickoff return), offensive holding will not be called if the player who is being held is involved in making the tackle at or near the spot of the potential hold or if the potential for holding occurs at the time the runner is being tackled by another defensive player, as the holding has not had an effect on the play.*

*Note 4: If there is potential for offensive holding but the action clearly occurs after the pass has been thrown to a downfield receiver, offensive holding will not be called as the holding has not had an effect on the play.*

*Note 5: If there is potential for offensive holding but the action occurs away from the point of attack and has no effect on the play, offensive holding will not be called.*

*Note 6: If there is potential for offensive holding as part of a double-team block in close line play, offensive holding will not be called unless the opponent is pulled to the ground by one of the blockers.*

*Note 7: During a defensive charge, if a defensive player uses a rip technique that puts an offensive player in a position that would normally be called holding, offensive holding will not be called unless the defender's feet are taken away from him by the offensive player's actions.*

(See 12-1 for special penalties involving use of hands, arms, body)

#### **Section 4 Chucking**

Chucking

Chucking is a means of warding off an eligible receiver who is in front of a defender by contacting him with a quick extension of arm or arms followed by the return of arm(s) to a flexed position, or by maintaining continuous and unbroken contact within five yards of the line of scrimmage, so long as the receiver has not moved beyond the point that is even with the defender (See 12-1-4-Exc. 1).

#### **Section 5 Clipping**

Clipping

Clipping is throwing the body across the back of the leg of an eligible receiver or charging or falling into the back of an opponent below the waist after approaching him from behind, provided the opponent is not a *runner*.

*Note: See 12-2-9 for additional interpretations or restrictions concerning clipping in close line play.*

**A.R. 3.5** Runner A1 advances 10 yards and is hit from behind by defensive player B1, who throws his body across the back of A1's leg.

**Ruling:** Legal and not a clip, because A1 was a runner. If A1 was not a runner, it would have been a clip.

#### **Section 6 Disqualified Player**

Disqualified Player

A Disqualified Player is one who is banished from further participation in the game and must return to his dressing room within a reasonable period of time for any of the following:

- (a) flagrant striking, kneeing, or kicking an opponent (12-2-1);
- (b) flagrant roughing of a kicker, passer, or any other opponent (12-2-6 and 12-2-11);
- (c) a palpably unfair act (12-3-3);
- (d) flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct by players or non-players (Rule 13); or

(e) repeat violation of a suspended player (Rule 5-3-pen. c).

*Note: Disqualified player is not to reappear in his team uniform nor return to any area other than to which spectators have access.*

### **Section 7 Down**

Down	<b>Article 1</b> A Down (or Play) is a period of action that starts when the ball is put in play (3-2-1) and ends when ball is next dead (7-4-1).
Scrimmage Down	A down that starts with a snap is known as a Scrimmage Down (3-29).
Fair Catch Kick Down	A down that starts with a fair catch kick is known as a fair catch kick down (10-1-6; 11-5-3).
Free Kick Down	A down that starts with a free kick is known as a Free Kick Down (6-1-1 and 2).
Series of Downs	<b>Article 2</b> A Series of Downs is the four consecutive charged scrimmage downs allotted to the offensive team during which it must advance the ball to a yard line called the necessary line in order to retain possession (7-1-1).
Necessary Line	The Necessary Line is always 10 yards in advance of the spot of the snap (which starts the series) except when a goal line is less than 10 yards from this spot. In that case the necessary line is the goal line.
Charged Down	When the offensive team has been in possession constantly during a scrimmage down, the down is counted as one of a series except as provided for a foul (14-8), and is known as a Charged Down.
First Down	The initial down in each series is known as the First Down, and if it is a charged down, subsequent charged downs are numbered consecutively until a new series is declared for either team (7-1-1).

### **Section 8 Drop Kick**

Drop Kick	A Drop Kick is a kick by a kicker who drops the ball and kicks it as, or immediately after, it touches the ground.
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### **Section 9 Fair Catch**

Fair Catch	A Fair Catch is an unhindered catch by any player of the receivers of a free kick or of a scrimmage kick except one that has not crossed the line of scrimmage (3-17-3), provided he has legally signalled his intention of attempting such a catch (10-1-1).
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- Mark of the Catch **Article 1** The Mark of the Catch is the spot from either:
- (a) where the ball is actually caught by a receiver after a fair catch signal, valid or invalid (10-1-2); or
  - (b) the spot of ball after a penalty for fair catch interference (10-1-4), and after a penalty for running into the maker of a fair catch (10-1-5).

*Note: For fair catch kick, see 10-1-6 and 11-5-3.*

### **Section 10 Field Goal**

Field Goal A Field Goal is made by kicking the ball from the field of play through the plane of the opponents' goal by a drop kick or a placekick either:

- (a) From behind the line on a play from scrimmage; or
- (b) During a fair catch kick. See 11-5-3; 3-9; and 10-1-6.

### **Section 11 Foul and Spots of Enforcement**

Foul **Article 1** A Foul is any infraction of a playing rule. Spot of Enforcement (or Basic Spot) is the *spot* at which a *penalty* is *enforced*. Four such spots are commonly used. They are:

- Spots of Enforcement
- (a) Spot of Foul—The spot where a foul was committed or is so considered by rule (14-1-1).
  - (b) Previous Spot—The identical spot where the ball was last put in play.
  - (c) Spot of Snap, backward pass, or fumble—The spot where the foul occurred or the spot where the penalty is to be enforced.
  - (d) Succeeding Spot—The spot where the ball would next be put in play if no distance penalty were to be enforced.

*Note: After a penalty enforcement, the ball is next put in play at the nearest inbounds line if the penalty enforcement would leave the ball outside the inbounds line.*

Enforcement After Touchdown **Exception:** If a foul occurs after a touchdown and before the ready for play signal for a Try, the succeeding spot is the spot of the next kickoff.

*Notes: A penalty is never enforced from the spot of a legal kick from scrimmage (9-1-17).*

*An enforcement includes a declination (14-6). See 14-1-5 for definition of basic spot and 3 and 1 rule.*



## Article 2 Types of Fouls

Dead Ball Foul (a) A Dead Ball Foul (or a subsequent foul) is a personal foul (12-2) or unsportsmanlike foul (12-3) that occurs after a down ends and before the next snap or free kick (14-5). See 14-1-7 to 10, 14-4.

*Note: A dead ball foul is always enforced from the succeeding spot.*

Multiple Foul (b) A Multiple Foul is two or more fouls by the same team during the same down, unless they are part of a double foul (14-4).

Double Foul (c) A Double Foul is a foul by each team during the same down and includes any multiple foul by either team, including dead ball fouls (14-3).

**A.R. 3.6** A's ball second-and-5 on A25. Runner A1 runs out of bounds on the A45, after which offensive A2 clips on the A30.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-25 on A30. A dead ball foul. See 14-1-7. It happened after the down ended and was a personal foul. See A.R. 14.55.

**A.R. 3.7** Defensive B1 holds an offensive player on the line of scrimmage. Defensive B2 was offside.

**Ruling:** A multiple foul because it was two fouls by the same team during the same down. See 14-4.

**A.R. 3.8** The offensive team is offside. The defensive team interferes with an eligible receiver downfield. The pass falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** A double foul because each team committed a foul during the same down. See 14-3.

**A.R. 3.9** The offensive team clips after Runner A1 scored.

**Ruling:** A foul between downs because the down ended when the score was made. Penalize on subsequent kickoff. See 14-1-7 and 14-5.

## Section 12 Free Kick

Free Kick **Article 1** A Free Kick is one that puts the ball in play to start a free kick down (3-2-1, 6-1-1): It includes:

(a) kickoff;

(b) safety kick; 6-1-2-a.

Free Kick Lines

**Article 2** The Free Kick Line for the kicking team is a yard line through the most forward point from which the ball is to be kicked (6-1-4).

The Free Kick Line for the receiving team is a yard line 10 yards in advance of the kicking team's free kick line (6-1-4).

### **Section 13 Huddle**

Huddle

A Huddle is the action of two or more players of the offensive team who, instead of assuming their normal position for the snap, form a group for getting the signal for the next play or for any other reason (7-2-5).

### **Section 14 In Touch and Impetus**

In Touch

**Article 1** A Ball is In Touch:

(a) after it has come from the field of play, it touches a goal line (plane) while in player possession; or

(b) while it is loose, it touches anything on or behind a goal line.

*Note: If a player while standing on or behind the goal line touches a ball that has come from the field of play and the official is in doubt as to whether the ball actually touched the goal line (plane), he shall rule that the ball was in touch.*

Ball Dead in Touch

**Article 2** A Ball Dead in Touch is one dead on or behind a goal line and it is either a *touchdown*, a *safety*, a *touchback*, a *field goal*, or the termination of a *Try* (11), or a loss of down at previous spot (8-1-5).

*Note 1: Sometimes a safety, touchdown, or Try (unsuccessful) is awarded because of a foul. In such cases they are penalties. Also note exceptions 8-4-2-Exc. 3, and 8-4-2-S.N.*

*Note 2: Momentum is an exception to dead in touch. See 11-4-1-Exc.*

Impetus

**Article 3** Impetus is the action of a player that gives momentum to the ball and sends it in touch.

The Impetus is attributed to the offense except when the ball is sent in touch through a new momentum when the *defense* muffs a ball which is at rest, or nearly at rest, or illegally *bats*:

(a) a kick or fumble;

(b) a backward pass after it has struck ground;

(c) or illegally kicks any ball (12-1-7).

*Note 1: If a player is pushed or blocked into any kick or fumble or into a backward pass after it has struck ground, and if such pushing or blocking is the primary factor that sends such a loose ball in touch, the impetus is by the pusher or blocker, and the pushed (blocked) player will not be considered to have touched the ball. See 9-1-10.*

*Note 2: Momentum is not applicable (11-4-1-Exc.)*

### **Section 15 Kicker**

**Kicker** A Kicker is the player of the offensive team who legally punts, placekicks, or dropkicks the ball. The offensive team is known as the Kickers during a kick.

A Receiver is any defensive player during a kick. The defensive team is known as the Receivers during a kick.

### **Section 16 Kickoff**

**Kickoff** A Kickoff is a free kick used to put the ball in play:

- (a) At start of the first and third periods;
- (b) After each Try; and
- (c) After a successful field goal (6-1-1-c).

*Note: Onside kick (see 6-3-1-Exc.).*

**Onside Kick** If a kicker obviously attempts to kick a ball short and the ball never goes 20 yards, it is defined as an onside kick (this also applies to a safety kick).

### **Section 17 Line of Scrimmage**

**Scrimmage Line** **Article 1** The Line of Scrimmage for each team is a yard line (plane) passing through the end of the ball nearest a team's own goal line. The term *scrimmage line*, or *line*, implies a play from scrimmage.

**Player on Line** **Article 2** A Player of Team A is on his line:

- (a) when his shoulders face Team B's goal line, and
- (b) if he is the snapper, no part of his body is beyond Team B's line at the snap,
- (c) if he is a non-snapper, he is not more than one foot behind his line. (For a non-snapper to be on the line of scrimmage, the guideline officials will use is that his helmet must break a vertical plane that would pass through the beltline of the snapper.)

*Note: Interlocking legs are permissible.*

**A.R. 3.10** Offensive A1 assumes a three-point stance with his shoulders facing defensive B's goal line. One hand is on the ground and it is on or not more than one foot behind his line. Neither of his feet nor the other hand is within one foot of his line.

**Ruling:** A1 is legally on his line.

Ball Crosses Line **Article 3** The ball has crossed the scrimmage line (*crosses line*) when, during a play from scrimmage, it has been run, fumbled, passed, or legally kicked by a Team A player, through the plane of their line and has then touched the ground or any one *behind* Team B's line.

*Note: At the snap the scrimmage lines are definitely fixed. After the snap the lines are no longer definite and the Official may construe the line of scrimmage as an indefinite area in the immediate vicinity of the two lines.*

### **Section 18 Neutral Zone, Start of Neutral Zone, and Encroaching**

Neutral Zone The Neutral Zone is the space the length of the ball between the offense's and the defense's scrimmage lines (planes). It **starts** when the ball is ready for play. (See neutral zone infraction, 7-2-2)

Encroaching A player is Encroaching (7-2-2) on the neutral zone when any part of his body is in it and contact occurs prior to the snap. The official must blow his whistle immediately.

**Exception:** The **snapper** is not considered in the neutral zone if no part of his body is beyond Team B's line at the snap (7-2-2).

*Note: The Back Judge is responsible for the 40/25-second count with the start of the neutral zone (4-3-9 and 4-3-10).*

### **Section 19 Offside**

Offside A player is Offside when any part of his body or his person is beyond his scrimmage line, free kick line, or fair catch kick line when the ball is put in play.

**Exceptions:** The *snapper* may be beyond his line provided he is not beyond the defensive line (3-18-Exception).

The *holder* of a *placekick* for a free kick may be beyond it (6-1-5-b).

The *holder* of a *fair catch kick* may be beyond it (11-5-3).

The *kicker* may be beyond the line, but his kicking foot may not be

(6-1-5-b).

## Section 20 Out of Bounds and Inbounds Spot

Player or Official  
Out of Bounds

**Article 1** A player or an Official is Out of Bounds when he touches:

(a) A boundary line; or

(b) Anything other than a player or a pylon on or outside a boundary line.

Ball Out of  
Bounds

**Article 2** The Ball is Out of Bounds when:

(a) the runner is out of bounds;

(b) while in player possession it touches a boundary line or anything other than a player on or outside such line; or

(c) a loose ball touches a boundary line or anything on or outside such line.

Inbounds Spot

**Article 3** The Inbounds Spot is a spot 70 feet 9 inches in from the sideline on the yard line passing through the spot where the ball or a runner is out of bounds between the goal lines.

Under certain conditions, the ball is dead in a side zone or has been placed there as the result of a penalty. See 7-3-7 and 7-5-1 to 6.

*Note: Ordinarily the out-of-bounds spot is the spot where the ball crossed a sideline. However, if a ball, while still within a boundary line, is declared out of bounds because of touching anything that is out of bounds, the out-of-bounds spot is on the yard line through the spot of the ball at the instant of such touching.*

**A.R. 3.11** Runner A1, with his feet inbounds, touches an official who is touching a sideline.

**Ruling:** Out of bounds.

**A.R. 3.12** Runner A1, with his feet inbounds, touches any player who is touching a sideline.

**Ruling:** Inbounds.

**A.R. 3.13** Runner A1 fumbles backwards, and the loose ball touches a defensive player B1 who is standing on sideline, and then ball rebounds into the field of play where B1 falls on it.

**Ruling:** Dead ball and out of bounds as soon as the loose ball touches the player on sideline. Offensive team's ball at inbounds

spot. Start game clock on snap.

**A.R. 3.14** Runner A1 touches the defensive team's pylon with any part of his body.

**Ruling:** Not out of bounds. The runner is not out of bounds until he touches anything other than a player or a pylon on or outside the boundary. Position of the ball is determined by its position when the runner touches out of bounds.

## **Section 21 Pass and Passer**

Pass and Passer **Article 1** A Pass is the movement of the ball caused by handing, throwing, shoving (shovel pass), or pushing (push pass) by a runner (3-27-1). Such a movement is a pass, even though the ball does not leave his hand or hands, provided a teammate takes it (hand-to-hand pass).

*Note: The term is also used to designate the action of a player who causes a pass as in, "He will pass the ball."*

Forward Pass **Article 2** A Forward Pass (8-1-1) is a pass that:

(a) initially moves forward (to a point nearer the opponent's goal line) after leaving the passer's hands and before touching another player; or

(b) is handed (regardless of the direction of movement of the ball) to a player who is in advance of a teammate from whose hands he takes or receives it.

*Note 1: When a Team A player is holding the ball to pass it forward, any intentional movement forward of his arm starts a forward pass. If a Team B player contacts the passer or the ball after forward movement begins, and the ball leaves the passer's hand, a forward pass is ruled, regardless of where the ball strikes the ground or a player.*

*Note 2: When a Team A player is holding the ball to pass it forward, any intentional forward movement of his arm starts a forward pass, even if the player loses possession of the ball as he is attempting to tuck it back toward his body. Also, if the player has tucked the ball into his body and then loses possession, it is a fumble.*

*Note 3: If the player loses possession of the ball while attempting to recock his arm, it is a fumble.*

**Exception:** When the ball is handed forward to an eligible pass receiver (8-1-2) who is behind the line, it is not a forward pass. If the receiver muffs, it is treated as a fumble. (See 8-1-6-S.N. (1) for ball handed forward to ineligible player behind the line.)

*Note: A fumble or muff going forward is disregarded as to its direction, unless the act is ruled intentional. In such cases, the fumble is a forward pass (8-1-1) and the muff is a bat (12-1-6).*

**A.R. 3.15** A pass legally handed forward to an eligible pass receiver is followed by a forward pass in flight from behind the line.

**Ruling:** A legal pass because the first handoff is not considered a forward pass (see Exception above).

**A.R. 3.16** A pass is legally handed forward to an eligible pass receiver, who muffs the ball and it is recovered by the defensive team.

**Ruling:** Not an incomplete pass. It is treated as a fumble and the defensive team keeps the ball.

Passer, Passing Team

**Article 3** A player who makes a legal forward pass is known as the Passer until the pass ends. The teammates of any player who passes forward (legally or illegally) are known collectively as the Passing Team or Passers.

Backward Pass

**Article 4** A Backward Pass (8-4-1) is any pass that is not a forward pass.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Forward, Beyond, in Advance of

(1) Forward, Beyond, or In Advance Of are terms that designate a point nearer the goal line of the defense unless the defense is specifically named. Converse terms are Backward or Behind.

(2) A pass parallel to a yard line or an offensive player moving parallel to it at the *snap* is considered backward.

(3) If a pass is batted, muffed, punched, or kicked in any direction, it does not change its original designation. However, such an act may change the impetus (3-14-3) if sent in touch or may be a foul (12-1-6, 7).

**A.R. 3.17** The ball, moving backwards in the hands of an offensive player A1, is possessed by offensive player A2 who is in advance of A1.

**Ruling:** A forward pass unless A2 is behind his line and is eligible to receive a forward pass.

**A.R. 3.18** The ball moving forward in the hands of offensive player A1, is possessed by A2 who is behind A1.

**Ruling:** A backward pass.

## **Section 22 Piling On**

Piling On Piling On is causing the body to fall upon any prostrate player (other than the runner), or upon a runner after the ball is dead (12-2-7).

## **Section 23 Placekick**

Placekick A Placekick is a kick made by a kicker while the ball is in a fixed position on the ground except as provided for a permissible manufactured tee at kickoff (6-1-5). The ball may be held in position by a teammate. See 11-5-4.

## **Section 24 Pocket Area**

Pocket Area The Pocket Area applies from the normal tight end position on each side of the center and extends backwards to the offensive team's own end line.

## **Section 25 Post-Possession Foul**

Post-Possession Foul A foul by the receiving team that occurs after a ball is legally kicked from scrimmage prior to possession changing. The ball must cross the line of scrimmage and the receiving team must retain the kicked ball. See 9-1-17-Exception 2.

## **Section 26 Punt**

Punt A Punt is a kick made by a kicker who drops the ball and kicks it while it is in flight (9-1-1).

## **Section 27 Runner and Running Play**

Runner **Article 1** The Runner is the offensive player who is in possession of a live ball (3-2-1), i.e., holding the ball or carrying it in any direction.

Running Play **Article 2** A Running Play is a play during which there is a runner and which is not followed by a kick or forward pass from behind the scrimmage line. There may be more than one such play during the same down (14-1-12).

## **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) The exception to a running play is significant only when a foul occurs while there is a runner prior to a kick or pass from behind the line (8-3-2, 9-1-17, and 14-1-12).

(2) The statement, a player may advance, means that he may become a runner, make a legal kick (9-1-1), make a backward pass (8-4-1), or during a play from scrimmage, an offensive player may forward pass (8-1-1) from behind his scrimmage line,



provided it is the first such pass during the down and the ball had not been beyond the line of scrimmage previously.

**A.R. 3.19** Receiving team player B1 catches a kickoff, advances, and fumbles. Kicking team player A2 recovers and advances.

**Ruling:** While runners B1 and A2 were in possession, there were two running plays during the same down.

### **Section 28 Safety**

**Safety** A Safety is the situation in which the ball is dead on or behind a team's own goal line provided:

- (a) the impetus (3-14-3) came from a player of that team;
- (b) it is not a touchdown (11-2); or

**Momentum** *Note: It is not a safety if a defensive player in the field of play intercepts a pass; catches or recovers a fumble, backward pass, scrimmage kick, free kick, or fair catch kick and his original momentum carries him into his end zone where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession. Instead the ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where the ball was intercepted, caught or recovered. (11- 4 - 1)*

### **Section 29 Scrimmage, Play From Scrimmage**

**Scrimmage Down** A Scrimmage Down is one that starts with a snap (3-31). From Scrimmage refers to any action from the start of the snap until the down ends or if Team A loses possession and Team B secures possession. Any subsequent action during the down, after a change of team possession, is **Not From Scrimmage**.

**Scrimmage Line** *Notes: The term scrimmage line or line implies a play by A from scrimmage. Line is used extensively for brevity and is not to be confused with side, end, or yard line. Line is also used for free kick line or fair catch kick line. For given reasons, action during a free kick down (6-1), or fair catch kick down, is sometimes referred to as a play not from scrimmage.*

### **Section 30 Shift**

**Shift** A Shift is the action of two or more offensive players who (prior to a snap), after having assumed a set position, simultaneously change the position of their feet by pivoting to or assuming a new set position with either one foot or both feet (7-2-5).

### **Section 31 Snap and the Snapper**

**Snap and the Snapper** A Snap is a backward pass that puts the ball in play to start a scrimmage down. The Snapper is the offensive player who

attempts a snap. See 7-3-3, for conditions pertaining to a legal snap.

### **Section 32 Supplemental Notes (S.N.)**

Supplemental Notes

Supplemental Notes (S.N.) are descriptive paragraphs used to amplify a given rule, which would otherwise be too cumbersome or involved in its scope or wording.

An Approved Ruling (A.R.) is often used for the same purpose (3-1). Additional Approved Rulings are also found in *The Official Casebook of the National Football League*.

Notes are usually more specific and apply to a particular situation. They are also used to indicate pertinent references to other rules.

### **Section 33 Suspended Player**

Suspended Player

A Suspended Player is one who must be withdrawn, for at least one down, for correction of illegal equipment (5-3).

### **Section 34 Tackling**

Tackling

Tackling is the use of hands or arms by a defensive player in his attempt to hold a runner or throw him to the ground (12-1-4).

### **Section 35 Team A and B, Offense and Defense**

Offense and Defense

**Article 1** Whenever a team is in possession (3-2-7), it is the Offense and, at such time, its opponent is the Defense.

Team A and Team B

**Article 2** The team that puts the ball in play is Team A, and its opponent is Team B. For brevity, a player of Team A is referred to as A1 and his teammates as A2, A3, etc. Opponents are B1, B2, etc.

*Note: A team becomes Team A when it has been designated to put ball in play, and it remains Team A until a down ends, even though there might be one or more changes of possession during the down. This is in contrast with the terms Offense and Defense. Team A is always the offense when a down starts, but becomes the defense if and when B secures possession during the down, and vice versa for each change of possession.*

### **Section 36 Time Out or Time In**

Time Out

**Article 1** A Time Out is an interval during which the Game Clock is stopped (4-3-1) and includes the intermissions (4-1-1 to 6).

*Note: The term Time Out (general) is not to be confused with a charged team time out, which is specific. (4-3-3).*

Time In	<p><b>Article 2</b> Time In is the converse (4-3-2) and is also used to indicate when the clock operator is to start his clock.</p> <p><b>Section 37 Touchback</b></p>
Touchback	<p>A Touchback is the situation in which a ball is dead on or behind a team's own goal line, provided the impetus came from an opponent and provided it is not a touchdown (11-6).</p> <p><b>Section 38 Touchdown</b></p>
Touchdown	<p>A Touchdown is the situation in which any part of the ball, legally in possession of a player inbounds, is on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line (plane), provided it is not a touchback (11-2).</p> <p><b>Section 39 Tripping</b></p>
Tripping	<p>Tripping is the use of the leg or foot in obstructing any opponent (including a runner) below the knee (12-1-3).</p> <p><b>Section 40 Try</b></p>
Try	<p>A Try is an opportunity given a team that has just scored a touchdown to score an additional one or two points during one scrimmage down (11-3).</p> <p><b>Section 41 Yard Line, Own Goal</b></p>
Own Goal	<p><b>Article 1</b> A team's Own Goal during any given period is the one it is guarding. The adjacent goal line is known as its (own) goal line.</p>
Yard Line	<p><b>Article 2</b> A Yard Line is any line and its vertical plane parallel to the end line. The Yard Lines (marked or unmarked) in the field of play are named by number in yards from a team's goal line to the center of the field.</p> <p><i>Note: The yard line 19 yards from team A's goal line is called A's 19-yard line. The yard line 51 yards from A's goal line is called B's 49-yard line. (For brevity, these are referred to as A's 19 and B's 49.)</i></p>

# RULE 4 GAME TIMING

## Section 1 Length of the Game

Length of Game and Intermissions	<p><b>Article 1</b> The length of the game is 60 minutes, divided into four periods of 15 minutes each, with intervals of 2 minutes between the first and second periods (first half) and between the third and fourth periods (second half). During these intermissions all playing rules continue in force and no representative of either team shall enter the field unless he is an incoming substitute. See 13-1-5.</p> <p><b>Penalty: For illegally entering field: Loss of 15 yards from succeeding spot (13-1-6, Pen.).</b></p>
Timing the Intermissions	<p><b>Article 2</b> The Back Judge is to time the 2-minute intermissions and shall sound his whistle (or signal visibly) at 1 minute and 50 seconds. The Referee shall sound his whistle immediately thereafter for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) play to start; and</li><li>(b) Play clock operator to start the timing of 25 seconds. See 4-3-10-S.N. 1.</li></ul>
Official Time	<p><b>Article 3</b> The stadium electric clock shall be the official time. The game clock operator shall start and stop the clock upon the signal of any official in accordance with the rules. The Line Judge (15-5-2) shall be responsible for supervision of the timing and in case the stadium clock becomes inoperative, or for any reason it is not being operated correctly, he shall take over the official timing on the field.</p> <p><i>Note: Game officials can correct the game clock only before the next play is run, including an untimed down or try.</i></p>
Halftime	<p><b>Article 4</b> Between the second and third periods, there shall be an intermission of 12 minutes. During intermission, play is suspended, and the teams may leave the field. This is to be timed by the Back Judge. See 15-5-4.</p> <p><i>Note: See 13-1-1 to 4 for fouls by non-players between halves.</i></p>
Kickoff on Schedule	<p><b>Article 5</b> Both teams must be on the field in ample time to kick off at the scheduled time for start of each half. Ample time prior to the start of the game is construed to be at least 15 minutes prior to the initial kickoff in order to ensure sufficient time for proper warm-up. Head coaches must be notified personally before the start of each half by designated members of the officiating crew.</p>

**Penalties: For delaying start of half:**

**(a) Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the kickoff as determined by Rule 4, Section 2.**

Loss of Coin  
Toss Option

**(b) Loss of coin toss option for both halves, including overtime, and 15 yards if a team is not on the field in ample time prior to the scheduled kickoff as indicated.**

Sudden Death

**Article 6** Provisions for the sudden death method of determining the winner in case of certain tie scores at the end of game will be found under Rule 16.

**Section 2 Starting Each Period**

Toss of Coin

**Article 1** Not more than three minutes before the kickoff, the Referee, in the presence of both team's captains (limit of six per team, all of whom must be uniformed members of the active list) shall toss a coin at the center of the field. The toss shall be called by the captain of the visiting team or by the captain designated by the Referee if there is no home team. The winner of the toss must choose one of two privileges and the loser is given the other. The two privileges are:

- (a) which team is to receive; or
- (b) the goal his team will defend.

**Penalty: For failure to comply: Loss of coin toss option, both halves, including overtime, and loss of 15 yards from spot of kickoff for first half only.**

Second Half  
Choice

For the second half, the captain who lost the pregame toss is to have the first choice of the two privileges listed in (a) or (b) unless one of the teams lost its first and second half option under 4-1-5. Immediately prior to the start of the second half, the captains of both teams must inform the Referee of their respective choices.

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE**

(1) When the teams first appear on field for the start of second half, the Referee is to assume a position on one side at the numbers and indicate which team will receive.

Change of Goals

**Article 2** At the end of the first and third periods, the teams must change goals. Team possession, number of succeeding down, and relative position of the ball on the field of play and of the necessary line remain unchanged.

**Section 3 Timing**

Time Out, Stop

**Article 1** The game clock operator shall stop the game clock

Clock (time out) when upon his own positive knowledge or signal or upon a signal by any official:

- (a) the ball is out of bounds (4-3-2-Exc. 3);
- (b) a receiver catches after a fair catch signal (10-1-2);
- (c) ball is dead in touch;
- (d) at end of down during which a foul occurs;

Status of Game  
Clock After  
Penalty  
Enforcement

*Note: If the game clock was stopped for a foul by either team (whether penalty is accepted or declined), it will be started when the ball is declared ready for play; except when the foul occurred after the two-minute warning of the first half, or the last five minutes of the second half, in which case the clock starts on the snap.*

- (e) whenever a forward pass is incomplete;
- (f) at the time of a foul, for which the ball remains dead or is dead immediately;
- (g) upon referee's signal of the two-minute warning for a half;
- (h) when a period expires;
- (i) when any official signals a time out for any other reason;
- (j) when a kicked ball is recovered illegally and/or surrounded; or
- (k) upon the completion of a down involving a change of possession.

**A.R. 4.1** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A40 where he is tackled. During A1's run, A2 clipped B1 at the A35.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-20 on A20. Game Clock starts on ready to play signal after penalty is enforced.

**A.R. 4.2** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A40 and steps out of bounds there. During A1's run, A2 clipped B1 at the A35.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-20 on A20. Game Clock starts with referee's ready signal as ball was dead when runner ran out of bounds, except in last two minutes of first half or last five minutes of second half.

Change of  
Possession

*Notes: Change of possession includes:*

- (1) recovery of loose ball by team not putting ball in play;

(2) *forward pass interception;*

(3) *free kick or kick from scrimmage recovered and/or advanced by the receiving team or that goes out of bounds; and*

(4) *touching of a scrimmage kick by the receiving team beyond the line of scrimmage that is recovered by the kicking team.*

Time In, Start  
Clock

**Article 2** The game clock operator shall start his clock (time in) after a kickoff when the ball is legally touched in the field of play.

*Note: Time is not in if:*

a) *the receiving team recovers in the end zone and makes no attempt to enter the field of play (including running laterally in the end zone);*

b) *the kicking team recovers in the field of play (referee's timeout under change of possession rule 4-3-7-S.N. 1); or*

c) *the receiving team signals for and makes a fair catch.*

**Exceptions:**

Time In After Out  
of Bounds

1) Except on a change of possession or after the two-minute warning of the first half and the last five minutes of the game, on a play from scrimmage whenever a runner goes out of bounds, the game clock is started when an official spots the ball at the inbounds mark and the referee gives the ready signal.

Time In on  
Referee's Whistle

2) After the two-minute warning of each half, if there is an excess time out, the game clock is started with the referee's whistle, if the clock was running (see also 4-3-6-b).

3) After a referee's time out (4-3-7), the game clock is started with the referee's whistle if the clock was running.

**A.R. 4.3** During the last two minutes of the game the offensive team safety kicks from the A20.

**Ruling:** Time in starts when the safety kick is legally touched by any player in the field of play (6-3-1-Note).

No extension of the automatic time outs in Article 1 shall be allowed unless any player requests a team time out, or a Referee orders a team time out or suspends play himself.

Consecutive  
Time Outs

*Note 1: In case of consecutive time outs between downs, time is in according to the classification of the last time out (4-3-1-Note 1).*

*Note 2: Consecutive team time outs between downs by either team are allowed so long as they are not by the same team and*

*no additional consecutive team time outs can be taken during the same dead ball period. Such time outs may follow an automatic time out (4-3-1) or Referee's time out (4-3-7) and maximum length of the second time out will be 30 seconds.*

**A.R. 4.4** Following a Referee's time out after a change of possession after a punt:

a) Team B takes its third team time out.

**Ruling:** Time in with snap.

b) Team B takes its fourth team time out prior to last two minutes.

**Ruling:** Team B is penalized 5 yards and time is in with snap.

Charged Time Outs

**Article 3** The referee shall declare a charged team timeout when he suspends play while the ball is dead:

(a) At the request for a time out by any player to any official; should a player appear injured on the field, official will call time out for an injured player. Time out shall not be charged to team unless:

Time Out for Injury Not Charged

(1) players on field or from bench attempt to assist injured player from the field unless directed to by team physician or trainer in consultation with official;

(2) injury occurs after two-minute warning of either half;

**Exception:**

(1) if a foul committed by an opponent causes the injury, a timeout is not charged even if it occurs after the two-minute warning or if the player remains in the game.

(2) if the injury occurs on a play in which there is a change of possession, timeout is not charged even if it occurs after the two-minute warning. The injured player may remain in the game if a time out is called by either team.

*Note: Members of both teams may go to the sideline for conference with coaches during an injury time out, but must be ready to play when referee signals ball in play as soon as treatment is completed or injured player has left the field.*

**Exceptions:** Following a time out as in (a) or (b), the Referee may order a charged time out for injury or for repair of legal equipment,



but only in an obvious emergency (4-3-4 and 5), and especially so during the last two minutes of a half (4-3-10).

**A.R. 4.5** Runner A1 is tackled and appears injured since he doesn't move.

**Ruling:** Official should call time out for injured player. Official should not try to determine if player is injured. Time out is not charged if conditions of 4-3-3-b are not violated.

Three Time Outs Allowed

**Article 4** Three charged team time outs are allowed a team during each half without a distance penalty (4-3-5). When any team time out occurs, the Back Judge shall start his watch and sound his whistle (or signal visibly) at the expiration of 1 minute and 50 seconds. The Referee shall not blow his whistle for play to start before such a signal from the Back Judge.

**Exception 1:** Whenever a team time out is called after the two-minute warning in a half, the time out shall last 30 seconds unless more time is required because of an injury or television utilizes a commercial opportunity.

**Exception 2:** The Referee may allow:

Injury and Equipment Time Out

(a) necessary time to attend to an injured player; or

(b) repair legal equipment.

*Note: In the judgement of the referee, if such a player is not ready for play in a reasonable amount of time, he must be withdrawn.*

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) In the case of extended team time outs ordered by the Referee for exceptions (a) and/or (b), the Back Judge shall not sound his whistle until the expiration of extra time is allowed.

(2) The Referee shall sound his whistle for play to start immediately upon Back Judge's signal for the expiration of any team time out.

(3) On all requested time outs, the Referee shall not signify that the ball will be put in play prior to 1 minute and 50 seconds of elapsed time, or 30 seconds during the last two minutes of a half.

Excess Time Outs Prior to Last Two Minutes

**Article 5** Team time outs prior to the two-minute warning of a half, in excess of three, for either team, is a foul unless the time out is for an injured player who is removed from the game (except injury time out caused by a foul, 4-3-6-b).

*Note: If a team desires to take an excess time out prior to the two-minute warning, they may do so and leave the injured player in the game, with appropriate penalty. Start game clock as normal after penalty enforcement.*

Referee Whistle  
After Excess

After the first three time outs during a half, all team time outs regardless of the reason are to be counted in determining the fourth or subsequent time outs. After the two minute warning of each half, if there is an excess time out by either team, time is in with the Referee's whistle for play to start, if the clock had been running. (See 4-3-10 for exception).

Excess Time  
Outs During Last  
Two Minutes

**Article 6** Team time outs after two-minute warning of half.

(a) After the two-minute warning of either half, additional time outs by either team after the third legal one are not allowed unless it is for an injured player who must be immediately designated and removed. A fourth time out under these conditions is not penalized. Subsequent requests (fifth or more) under these same conditions are allowed, but are penalized five yards. On all excess time outs against the defense, the play clock is reset to 40 seconds.

Excess Time  
Outs During Last  
Two Minutes, 10-  
Second Run Off

(b) After the two-minute warning of either half while time is in, if the score is tied or the team in possession is behind in the score and the offensive team has exhausted its legal time outs, an additional time out may be requested and granted under (a) above. However, the ball shall not be put in play until the time on the game clock has been reduced by 10 seconds. The Referee, in a position between the center and the quarterback, will advise (by using the microphone) the game clock operator to take 10 seconds off the clock. During this time interval, the Umpire will be directly over the ball. After 10 seconds have been taken off the game clock, both officials will back away with the Umpire raising his arm above his head. After a momentary delay, the Umpire will quickly lower his arm and give the wind-the-game-clock signal. This signal indicates to the game clock operator to restart the game clock and also to the offensive team that it may legally snap the ball. Note: There can never be a 10-second run off against the defensive team.

**Penalty: For each excess time out: Loss of five yards from succeeding spot for delay. Necessary line and number of down remain the same.**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) Either half can end during the 10-second period between time in and permissible play resumption, as well as during enforcement

or declination of penalty for offensive team fouls.

(2) This applies to Sudden Death Rule (Rule 16) in force for Wild Card Playoffs, Divisional Playoffs, Conference Championship Games, the Super Bowl, and the Pro Bowl.

Feigning Injuries

(3) The Rules Committee deprecates feigning injuries, with subsequent withdrawal, to obtain a time out without penalty and even so when done to conserve time. Coaches are urged to cooperate in discouraging this practice. The Referee should refuse such a request when it is an obvious evasion of the rules.

(4) The Referee must notify both captain and head coach when their team has been charged with three time outs, and no penalty is to be enforced for an excess time out unless such notice has been given. The Referee shall not delegate this notification to any other person.

**A.R. 4.6** Offensive team A, with the score tied (or team A behind) in the last two minutes of the half and the clock running:

(a) Requests its fourth time out because of an injured player.

**Ruling:** Granted. No five-yard penalty. Player has to be removed. Ten-second run off. Ball will not be put in play until the Umpire drops and winds his arm in view of the center and quarterback. Requests its fourth time out due to an injured player.

(b) Requests its fifth time out because of an injured player.

**Ruling:** Granted. Five yard penalty. Player has to be removed. Ten-second run off. Ball will not be put in play until the Umpire drops and winds his arm in view of the center and quarterback. Requests its fifth time out due to an injured player.

Referee's Time Out

**Article 7** Play may be suspended by Referee (Referee's Time Out) at any time without penalty to either team when playing time is being destroyed because of delay not intentionally caused by either team, provided it does not violate some specific rule.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Automatic Referee's Time Out

The following situations are automatic Referee's time outs:

(1) Where there is a change of possession. The game clock will start on the snap.

(2) Any possibility of a measurement for first down or in consulting a captain about one.

(3) Any time the player who originally takes the snap is tackled behind the line of scrimmage, except in the last two minutes of the half or the game.

*Note 1: The play clock starts at 40 seconds after the tackle.*

*Note 2: Prior to the two-minute warning of a half, the Referee will allow receivers to approach the line of scrimmage before giving the wind-the-game-clock signal.*

**Exception:**

Timing Last Two Minutes

During the last two minutes of a half, the game clock shall not be stopped.

*Notes:*

(4) Undue pileups on the runner or ball, or determining possession after a fumble during time in.

(5) Undue delay by officials in spotting ball for the next snap.

(6) Illegal recovery of any kicked ball from scrimmage.

(7) The snap made before the Referee can assume his position (not a repeated act). See 4-3-9-h.

(8) Injury to an official or member of the chain crew.

(9) Captain's choice of a fair catch kick or snap after a fair catch. See 11-5-3; 10-1-6.

(10) Officials' conference for a rules interpretation or an enforcement (15-1-6). Game clock starts as original status dictates.

(11) Repairing or replacing game equipment (not player equipment).

(12) Line Judge's signal of two minute warning for a half; the game clock starts on the snap.

Procedures for Crowd Noise

(13) Obvious inability of the offense to hear team signals because of crowd noise. When such situations prevail, the following procedures must be followed:

(a) If the quarterback (or other signal-caller) of the offensive team indicates to the Referee that his teammates cannot hear his signals, and the Referee deems it reasonable to conclude the players on the offense (other than wide receivers) cannot hear, the Referee will extend his right arm fully over his head to indicate disruptive crowd noise. The Referee then will

signal a Referee's time out and ask the defensive captain to use his best effort to quiet the crowd. The Referee then will announce over his wireless microphone that he has asked the defensive team to assist in quieting the crowd so that the game can continue. He then will return to his position behind the offensive team.

(b) If, after the public announcement described in (a) above, crowd noise conditions in that same ball possession are deemed by the Referee, with or without appeal by the offensive signal-caller, to be disruptive to the offense, he again will use the upraised-arm signal and will announce over his wireless microphone that any further crowd noise which is disruptive will result in forfeiture by the defense of one of its remaining time outs in the half or, in the absence of time outs, a five-yard penalty against the defense for delay of the game.

(c) If, after the public announcement described in (b) above, crowd noise conditions in that same ball possession are deemed by the Referee, with or without appeal by the offensive signal-caller, to be disruptive to the offense, he again will use the upraised-arm signal and will, if such signal does not quiet the crowd, assess the appropriate penalty provided for in (b) above.

(d) Thereafter if disruptive crowd noise recurs in the same ball possession, the Referee, with or without appeal from the offensive signal-caller, will use the upraised-arm signal while remaining in his normal position behind the offensive formation and without calling a Referee's time out. Following a momentary pause to confirm that disruptive noise conditions are continuing, he will assess the appropriate penalty provided for in (b) above.

(e) If, upon any appeal from the offensive signal-caller, the Referee deems that noise conditions are not sufficiently disruptive to apply the crowd-noise procedures, he will deny the appeal and proceed with normal game timing. The Referee's signal that he is denying the appeal will be to point toward the defensive team's goal line.

(f) During the time out described in (a) above, the offensive team may huddle. When the offensive team again attempts to run a play, the game clock will start on the snap. The 40/25-second play clock will not be used.

(g) If, in any ball possession subsequent to the first possession of the game that involves disruptive crowd noise, the Referee, either with or without an appeal by the offensive signal-caller, deems it to be reasonable to conclude that the players on offense (other than wide receivers) cannot hear, the Referee will signal a Referee's time out and announce over his wireless microphone that the defensive team is now subject to appropriate crowd noise penalties. Any crowd-noise interruption thereafter in that same ball possession will result in the Referee using his upraised-arm signal, followed, if necessary, by a penalty against the defense.

(h) Once the procedures of (a) and (b) above have been followed in a given game, disruptive crowd-noise incidents in any subsequent ball possession will be handled by the procedures of (g). In effect, for each ball possession during which disruptive crowd noise occurs (with the exception of the first in the game), the Referee will make one public announcement after which he may assess a penalty, and he will thereafter always precede any such penalty by the upraised-arm signal but not by a public announcement. As specified in (a) and (b) above, he will make two public announcements before assessing a penalty on the first ball possession of the game during which disruptive crowd noise occurs.

(i) In any instance where the Referee is signaling with upraised arm, the offensive signal-caller may, if he chooses, continue to play. Such signal indicates that disruptive crowd-noise conditions prevail; it does not automatically stop play nor does it automatically result in a penalty. Conversely, if the Referee's arm is not upraised, the penalty situation does not prevail and the offense must attempt to continue play.

(14) On a play from scrimmage, if a fumble goes out of bounds forward by any player, the game clock stops on the official's time out signal, then restarts on the wind of the game clock signal. (See 7-5-6-Note)

(15) On a play not from scrimmage, if a fumble goes out of bounds forward by any player, the game clock stops on the official's time out signal and will restart at the snap.

Time In After  
Referee's Whistle

**Article 8** After a Referee's time out, time in starts with his whistle (clock signal).

**Exception:** After a time out for a change of possession, notification of two minutes remaining for a half, stopping the game clock for inability to hear signals, and after enforcement (when

appropriate) time is in with the snap. See 11-5-3 and 15-1-10.

**A.R. 4.7** Quarterback A1 drops back to pass and is tackled behind his line.

**Ruling:** Referee's time out. Stop the game clock until the ball can be resotted at succeeding spot. (40-second play clock starts when time out signal is given).

**A.R. 4.8** Receiver B1 gives a fair-catch signal and catches ball.

**Ruling:** Referee's time out. Stop game clock. When ready for play, start game clock with snap or fair-catch kick.

**A.R. 4.9** At the instant a runner is contacted by a defensive player, ball is inbounds. He then:

a) Slides across side line.

**Ruling:** Not a time out.

b) Loses possession after he touches ground and ball crosses sideline.

**Ruling:** Not a time out unless it is evident that undue time will be consumed in spotting ball (Referee's time out).

Delay of Game

**Article 9** The ball must be put in play promptly and any action or inaction by either team that tends to prevent this is a delay of game. It is delay of game if the ball is not put into play within 40/25 seconds:

(a) by snap after the neutral zone starts (3-18);

(b) after a Referee's time out.

Other examples of action or inaction that are to be construed as delay of game or attempts to conserve playing time are:

(c) Repeatedly charging into the neutral zone prior to the snap when not otherwise ruled encroaching (7-2-2).

(d) With time in, start of neutral zone is unduly delayed by failure of players of either team to assemble promptly.

Hurry Up Offense and Snap

*Note: During last two minutes of half, once the ball has been resotted for the succeeding down and the Head Linesman has placed his bean bag on the ground at the new line of scrimmage, the Umpire, upon signal from the Referee, is to step away from the ball. At this point a snap may be made. If ball is snapped before all members of defensive team have taken their proper position on line of scrimmage, play is to be stopped immediately and that team penalized five yards for offside.*

- (e) When a player remains on a dead ball or on a runner who has been downed.
- (f) Failure to play immediately when ordered, including not kicking the ball on a kickoff, safety kick, or fair-catch kick within the designated 25 seconds on the play clock.
- (g) Repeatedly snapping ball after the neutral zone is established before the Referee can assume his position (7-3-3-c-2).
- (h) A runner repeatedly attempts to advance after he is so held that his forward progress is stopped, after whistle is blown.
- (i) When one of the kickers recovers a kick (unless one recovered behind line other than a Try-kick), and carries it in any direction. See 9-1-4-Note; 9-1-6.
- (j) Undue advance by a receiver who catches after a fair catch signal (valid or invalid) unless after touching kickers in flight. See 10-1-2-Exc.
- (k) Opponent taking ball from runner after it is dead, causes a loose ball or scramble that consumes playing time to re-spot the ball (7-4-1-d).
- (l) Undue delay in assembling after a time out.
- (m) Substitute entering during play unless interference (12-3-3).
- (n) Defensive player(s) aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage cannot make quick and abrupt actions that are not part of normal defensive player movement in an obvious attempt to cause an offensive player(s) to foul (false start). (Blow whistle immediately.)

**Penalty: For delay of game: Loss of five yards:**

- (a) from succeeding spot if between downs and ball remains dead; or**
- (b) from previous spot if ball was in play. Number of down and necessary line remain the same.**

*Note: After an enforcement for delay of game by the defense, prior to or at the snap, number of down and necessary line remain the same. See 14-8-5.*

Action to  
Conserve Time

**Article 10** A team is not permitted to conserve time in the last 60 seconds of either half by committing any of the following acts: fouls by either team that prevent the snap (i.e., false start, encroachment, etc.), intentional grounding, an illegal forward pass thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage with the intent to conserve time, throwing a backward pass out of bounds with the



intent to conserve time, and any other intentional foul that causes the clock to stop.

**Penalty: Loss of five yards unless a larger distance penalty is applicable. When actions referred to above are committed by the offensive team with the clock running, officials will run 10 seconds off the game clock before permitting the ball to be put in play on the ready for play signal. The clock will start on the ready for play signal. If the offensive team has timeouts remaining, it will have the option of using a timeout in lieu of a 10-second runoff. If the action is by the defense, the play clock will be reset to 40 seconds and the game clock will start on the ready signal. NOTE: There never can be a 10-second run off against the defensive team.**

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Play Clock 40/25-  
Second Count

(1) The Play Clock operator shall time the 40/25-second intervals between plays upon signal from game official(s). The 40-second interval is to start when one play ends. If certain administrative stoppages or other delays occur such as change of possession, team time out, referee's time out, injury, measurement, or any unusual delay that interferes with the normal flow of play, 25-second interval is to be used (even if the 40-second clock was already counting down). The 40/25-second clock is to start when:

- a) neutral zone starts with Referee's whistle (3-18);
- b) referee's whistle indicates that play may start following any time out.

If the ball is not put in play within this time, he sounds his whistle for the foul and the ball remains dead. When the foul is prior to a snap, defensive team may decline distance penalty, in which case down is replayed. See 14-6-Exc. (4).

(2) More than two successive penalties, during the same down, after a warning is unsportsmanlike conduct (12-3-1-h, i).

(3) When the ball is dead during time in, the Referee must determine immediately if a measurement is indicated, unless there has been a change of possession. If indicated, he declares a Referee's time out. Otherwise, he immediately signals start of neutral zone before approximating distance to be gained. The distance and the number of down are to be announced as he assumes his normal stance.

(4) Certain acts of delay may involve stopping the game clock immediately. Repeated violations of substitution rule to conserve time are unsportsmanlike conduct (12-2-13-g, h and 4-3-9).

Backward Pass  
Out of Bounds

(5) During a play from scrimmage a backward pass going out of bounds during the last two minutes of a half stops the game clock. Time is in with the Referee's whistle (clock signal) when the ball is ready for play.

*Note: Time for a half can expire before a ball can be put in play following Referee's whistle for play to start.*

**A.R. 4.10** With eight seconds remaining in the first half, A1 throws a backward pass out-of-bounds to stop the game clock.

**Ruling:** Half over, 10-second runoff for conserving time.

**A.R. 4.11** With seven seconds remaining in the first half, offensive guard A1 commits a false start in order to stop the game clock.

**Ruling:** Half over, 10-second runoff for conserving time.

Extension of  
Period

**Article 11** If at the end of any period, time expires while the ball is in play, time is not called until down ends. During such a down:

Defensive Foul at  
End of Period

(a) If there is an accepted foul (not one of a double foul) by defense, the offended team may choose to extend period by one down (enforcement as usual). If the first or third period is not so extended, any penalty (unless declined) is enforced before the start of the succeeding period.

Offensive Foul at  
End of Period

(b) If there is a foul by offense, there shall be no extension of the period. If the foul occurs on the last play of the half, no score made by offense is counted.

**Exception:** If offensive foul is (1) illegal touching of a kick, (2) fair catch interference, (3) palpably unfair act, or (4) personal foul or unsportsmanlike foul prior to an interception, the period may be extended by an untimed down, if defense so chooses.

**A.R. 4.12** Fourth-and-10 on B40. On the last play of the first quarter offensive team misses an attempted field goal. Defensive team was offside. There is a strong wind at their back.

**Ruling:** Offensive team has option of extending period by an untimed down. It can put ball in play from the B35 and kick the same way. If the period is not extended, it would be fourth and five on B35 at start of second period.

**A.R. 4.13** Third-and-10 on A45. Offensive team is offside. Quarterback A1 throws a legal pass which is complete to End A2 who runs for a score. Time for second half expired during play.

**Ruling:** No score and game over as it was an offensive foul on last play of half.

**A.R. 4.14** Fourth-and-10 on A20. A punt is touched illegally by kicking team player A1 on the A45 who falls on the ball as time runs out in second half.

**Ruling:** One scrimmage down allowed, if desired, by receivers from the A45. Untimed down as it was an illegal touch.

**A.R. 4.15** Defensive B1 intercepts at midfield on the last play of either half. On runback, B2 clips at the A40. A1 piles on after runner B1 is tackled on the A30.

**Ruling:** Extend the period with an untimed down from A40. B's ball. See 14-3-3.

**A.R. 4.16** The offensive team punts as time for the half expires. Defensive player B1 gives a valid fair catch signal and catches the ball on the A35.

**Ruling:** The receiving team may extend the period by a fair catch kick (10-1-6; 11-5-3). If the ball is kicked out of bounds, the half is over.

Double Foul at  
End of Period

(c) If a double foul (14-3) occurs on the last play of the first or third periods, the period is not extended. If a double foul occurs during the last play of either half, extend the period.

**Exception:** The half is not extended if:

- (1) both fouls are dead ball fouls;
- (2) 5 vs. 15, with major foul on the offense (14-3-1-Exc. 1);
- (3) Double foul with change of possession, clean hands rule (14-3-2).

Touchdown on  
Last Play

(d) If a touchdown is made, the Try shall be allowed (except during a sudden-death period).

Fair Catch on  
Last Play

(e) If a fair catch is signaled and made, receivers may choose to extend the period by one fair-catch kick down (10-1-6). If the first or third period is not so extended, the receivers may start the succeeding period with a snap or fair catch kick (11-5-3).

(f) If no fair catch signal is given and the kickers interfere with the receiver's opportunity to catch a kick, the receiving team may extend the period by one down from scrimmage. If a fair catch is signaled and the kickers interfere with the receivers opportunity to catch a kick, the receiving team may extend the period by either one down from scrimmage or a fair-catch kick (10-1-6).

Extension of First  
or Third Periods

(g) If the first or third period is extended for any reason, or if a touchdown occurs during the last play of such a period, any

additional play, including a Try, shall be completed before change of goal. If a period is extended for any reason, it shall continue until a down free from any foul specified in (a) to (f) is completed.

Safety on Last Play

(h) If a safety occurs during the last play of a half, the score counts. No safety kick is made unless it resulted from a foul, and even so unless receivers request that kick be made.

Defensive Fouls During Last 40 Seconds of Half

**Article 12** In the last 40 seconds of either half, with the Game Clock running, a defensive foul prior to the snap cannot prevent the termination of a half except for the normal options, including remaining timeouts, available to the offensive and defensive team.

# RULE 5 PLAYERS, SUBSTITUTES, EQUIPMENT

## Section 1 Players

Number of  
Players

**Article 1** The game is to be played by two teams of 11 players each. If a snap or free kick is made while a team has:

(a) fewer than 11 players on field, ball is in play and there is no penalty;

(b) more than 11 players on field, ball is in play and there is a five-yard penalty (5-2-1); or

(c) a player who fails to inform the Referee of a change of his eligibility when required by rule, no official is to notify team of this fact before play starts and there is a penalty (7-2-3).

Team Captains

**Article 2** Each team must designate its captain(s), and that player(s) is the sole representative of his team in all communications with Officials. See Rule 18.

First Choice

**Article 3** A captain's first choice from any alternative privileges which may be offered his team, before or during the game, is final and not subject to change.

Players  
Numbered by  
Position

**Article 4** All players must wear numerals on their jerseys in accordance with Rule 5, Section 3, Article 3(c), and such numerals must be by playing position as follows: quarterbacks, punters, and placekickers, 1-19 (and 10-19 for wide receivers if 80-89 are all otherwise assigned); running backs and defensive backs, 20-49; centers, 50-59 (60-79 if 50-59 unavailable); offensive guards and tackles, 60-79; wide receivers and tight ends, 80-89; defensive linemen, 60-79 (90-99 if 60-79 unavailable); and linebackers, 50-59 (90-99 if 50-59 unavailable).

If a player changes his position during his playing career in the NFL and such change moves him out of a category specified above, he must be issued an appropriate new jersey numeral.

Any request to wear a numeral for a special position not specified above (e.g., H-back) must be made to the Commissioner.

During the preseason period when playing rosters are larger, the League will allow duplication and other temporary deviations from the numbering scheme specified above, but the rule must be adhered to for all players during the regular season and postseason. Clubs must make numerals available to adhere to the rule, even if it requires putting back into circulation a numeral that has been retired or withheld for other reasons. See 7-2-3 for reporting change of position.

Players

**Article 5** A player must be withdrawn and substituted for when

Withdrawn and  
Substituted

he is disqualified (12-2, 3) or suspended (5-3). A suspended player may re-enter when legal. A disqualified player must leave the playing field enclosure and go to the team locker room within a reasonable time.

**Penalties:**

**(a) For illegal return: Loss of five yards from succeeding spot after discovery.**

**(b) For return of a disqualified player: Loss of 15 yards and exclusion from playing field enclosure.**

Coaches  
Responsible for  
Legal Sub

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) Coaches are to assume full responsibility for the legality of substitutions, but this does not preclude a penalty if discovered before or after a substitute reports.

Enforcement  
Spot for Illegal  
Sub

(2) If it is not discovered until the end of a down but prior to the start of next one that a player had returned illegally, enforcement is from the previous spot when definitely known. Otherwise, enforcement is from succeeding spot as a foul between downs (14-5).

**Section 2**

**Substitutes**

Legal  
Substitution

**Article 1** Substitutes may not enter the field while the ball is in play. Any entering offensive substitute who participates in a play must enter while the ball is dead and must move onto the field as far as the inside of the field numerals; in addition, the player or players replaced must have cleared the field on their own side (between end lines) prior to the snap or free kick.

There can never be 12 or more players in the offensive huddle.

Quick Snap  
Following  
Substitution

*Note: While in the process of substitution or simulated substitution, the offense is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line and snapping the ball with the obvious attempt to cause a defensive foul; i.e., too many men on the field. If in the judgment of the officials this takes place, the following procedure will be applied:*

(1) If the play takes place and a defensive foul results, the flag will be picked up and the down replayed. At this time, the referee will notify the head coach that any further use of this tactic will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty being assessed.

*Note: Covering official(s) will extend both arms horizontally to indicate that substitutions have been made. Also, the same quick-snap rule will not be applicable in the last two minutes of either half.*

(2) On a fourth down punting situation, the Referee and the Umpire will not allow a quick snap which would prevent the

defense from having a reasonable time to complete their substitutions. This will apply throughout the entire game.

**Penalty: For illegal substitution: Loss of five yards:**

**(1) From previous spot if the ball was in play. Number of down and necessary line to gain remains the same**

**(a) withdrawn player on field at snap or free-kick; or**

**(b) clearing field on opponents' side or across end line (whether violation is discovered during down, or at end of down); or**

**(2) From succeeding spot if between downs and ball remains dead:**

**(a) twelve-or-more players in huddle (Blow whistle immediately).**

*Note: Interference with play by illegal substitutes during (a) and (b) is a palpably unfair act (12-3-3).*

Interference with play during (a) to (c) is a palpably unfair act (12-3-3).

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) If an illegal substitute enters during a live ball, the penalty will be enforced in accordance to Rule 14.

(2) See 5-1-5 for illegal return or withdrawal.

(3) If a substitute enters during dead ball with time in or after Referee's whistle following a time out, no Official is to signal his entry and Back Judge continues his timing of 40/25 seconds, if and when it has been started (4-3-10-S.N. 1).

**Exception:** On an illegal return, ball remains dead if discovered prior to snap.

Substitute  
Becomes Player

(4) Under no circumstances is Referee to delay start of neutral zone because of an incoming substitute.

(5) A substitute is not to report to an Official. He becomes a player when:

a) he informs a teammate that he is replacing him;

b) he participates in at least one play after communicating with a teammate;

c) a teammate voluntarily withdraws upon his entering; or

d) in the absence of any of the above a, b, or c, he is on the field at snap, fair catch kick, or free kick, or when a snap, fair catch kick, or free kick is imminent.

(6) A player is legally in the game when he has participated in at least one play.

(7) A player is legally substituted for when he leaves the game for at least one play.

(8) A substitute may not enter the field of play, proceed to the area of the huddle, communicate with a teammate(s), and then leave the field without participating in one play. Violations of this rule will be penalized as Unsportsmanlike Conduct. (12-3-h)

(9) Referee shall sound his whistle for play to start immediately upon completion of a penalty for an illegal substitution, return, or withdrawal. The game clock will start as appropriate. See 4-3-10.

Conserving Time

**Article 1** After the two-minute warning of either half, a violation of the substitution rule occurs while ball is dead with time in by the team in possession.

(a) If the act is designed to conserve time, Referee stops play, penalizes, and will run off 10 seconds prior to allowing ball to be put in play. Clock starts when Umpire lowers his arm and gives wind-the-game-clock signal. See 4-3-10.

(b) Repeated violations of substitution rule to conserve time are unsportsmanlike conduct (12-3-1-h).

**Section 3 Equipment, Uniforms, Player Appearance**

General Policy

**Article 1** Throughout the game-day period while in view of the stadium and television audience, including during pregame warm-ups, all players must dress in a professional manner under the uniform standards specified in this Section 3. They must wear equipment offering reasonable protection to themselves while reasonably avoiding risk of injury to other players. And they generally must present an appearance that is appropriate to representing their individual clubs and the National Football League. The term uniform, as used in this policy, applies to every piece of equipment worn by a player, including helmet, shoulder pads, thigh pads, knee pads, and any other item of protective gear, and to every visible item of apparel, including but not limited to pants, jerseys, wristbands, gloves, stockings, shoes, visible undergarments, and accessories such as headwear coverings, worn under helmets and hand towels. All visible items worn on game-day by players must be issued by the club or the League, or, if from outside sources, must have approval in advance by the League office.

Team Colors

**Article 2** Pursuant to the official colors established for each NFL club in the League Constitution and Bylaws, playing squads are permitted to wear only those colors or a combination of those colors for helmets, jerseys, pants, and stockings; provided that white is also an available color for jerseys and mandatory color for the lower portion of stockings [see 5-3-3-(i), "Stockings," below]. Each player on a given team must wear the same colors on his



uniform as all other players on his team in the same game. Before July 1 each year, home clubs are required to report to the League office their choice of jersey color (either white or official team color) for their home games of that forthcoming season (including postseason, in the event that the club should become a host for such a game), and visiting clubs must wear the opposite. For preseason, regular season, or postseason games, the two competing teams may wear jerseys in their official colors (non-white), provided the Commissioner determines that such colors are of sufficient contrast.

Mandatory  
Equipment,  
Apparel

**Article 3** All players must wear the equipment and uniform apparel listed below, which must be of a suitably protective nature, must be designed and produced by a professional manufacturer, and must not be cut, reduced in size, or otherwise altered unless for medical reasons approved in advance by the Commissioner; provided, however, that during pregame warm-ups players may omit certain protective equipment at their option, except that helmets must be worn. Where additional rules are applicable to specific categories of mandatory equipment or apparel, or where related equipment is optional, such provisions are also spelled out below.

Helmets, Face  
Protectors

(a) Helmet with chin strap (white only) fastened and face mask attached. Face masks must not be more than 5/8-inch in diameter and must be made of rounded material; transparent materials are prohibited.

Clear (transparent) plastic face shields for eye protection are optional. Tinted eye shields may be worn only after the League office is supplied with appropriate medical documentation and approval is subsequently granted. The League office has final approval. League office is supplied in advance with appropriate medical documentation that the shield is needed.

No visible identification of a manufacturer's name or logo on the exterior of a helmet or on any attachment to a helmet is permitted unless provided for under a commercial arrangement between the League and manufacturer; in no event is identification of any helmet manufacturer permitted on the visible surface of a rear cervical pad. All helmets must carry a small NFL shield logo on the rear lower-left exterior, which logo will be provided in quantity by the League. All helmets must carry on the rear lower right exterior, an approved warning label (such labels will be supplied in quantity by the League).

Jerseys

(b) Jersey must cover all pads and other protective equipment worn on the torso and upper arms, and must be appropriately tailored to remain tucked into the uniform pants throughout the game. Tearaway jerseys are prohibited. Mesh jerseys with large

fish-net material (commonly referred to as “bullet-hole” or “port-hole” mesh) are also prohibited. Surnames of players in letters a minimum of 2 1/2-inches high must be affixed to the exterior of jerseys across the upper back above the numerals; nicknames are prohibited; and in cases of duplicate surnames, the first initial of the given name must be used. All jerseys must carry a small NFL Equipment logo at the middle of the yoke of the neck on the front of the garment. All fabrics must be approved the League office prior to production.

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|---------------|---|
| Numerals      | (c) Numerals on the back and front of jerseys in accordance with Rule 5, Section 1, Article 4. Such numerals must be a minimum of 8 inches high and 4 inches wide, and their color must be in sharp contrast with the color of the jersey. Smaller numerals should be worn on the tops of the shoulders or upper arms of the jersey. Small numerals on the back of the helmet or on the uniform pants are optional.   |
| Pants         | (d) Pants must be worn over the entire knee area; pants shortened or rolled up to meet the stockings above the knee are prohibited. No part of the pants may be cut away unless an appropriate gusset or other device is used to replace the removed material. All pants must carry a small NFL Equipment logo on the front left groin area of the pants, midway between the fly opening and side seam, and 1/2-inch below the belt.  |
| Shoulder Pads | (e) Shoulder pads must be completely covered by the uniform jersey.   |
| Stockings     | (f) Stockings must cover the entire area from the shoe to the bottom of the pants, and must meet the pants below the knee. Players are permitted to wear as many layers of stockings and tape on the lower leg as they prefer, provided the exterior is a one-piece stocking that includes solid white from the top of the shoe to the mid-point of the lower leg, and approved team color or colors (non-white) from that point to the top of the stocking. Uniform stockings may not be altered (e.g. over-stretched, or cut at the toes, or sewn short) in order to bring the line between solid white and team colors lower or higher than the mid-point of the lower leg. No other stockings and/or opaque tape may be worn over the one-piece, two-color uniform stocking. Barefoot punters and placekickers may omit the stocking of the kicking foot in preparation for and during kicking plays. |
| Shoes         | (g) Shoes must be of standard football design, including “sneaker” type shoes such as basketball shoes, cross-training shoes, etc. League-approved tri-colored shoes are permitted with black, white, and one team color. Each team must select a dominant color for its shoes, either black or white (with a conforming selection of either all-black or all-white shoelaces). The selection of dominant color must be reported by each team to the League Office no later than July 1 each year. Each player may select among shoe styles previously approved by the League   |

Office. All players on the same team must wear shoes with the same dominant color. Approved shoe styles will contain one team color which must be the same for all players on a given team. A player may wear an unapproved standard football shoe style as long as the player tapes over the entire shoe to conform to his team's selected dominant color. Logos, names, or other commercial identification on shoes are not permitted to be visible unless advance approval is granted by the League Office (see Article 7). Size and location of logos and names on shoes must be approved by the NFL. When a shoe logo or a name approved by the League Office is covered with an appropriate use of tape (see Article 4(f)), players will be allowed to cut out the tape covering the original logo or name, provided the cut is clean and is the exact size of the logo or name. The logo or name of the shoe manufacturer must not be re-applied to the exterior of taped shoes unless advance approval is granted by the League Office. Kicking shoes must not be modified (including using a shoelace wrapped around toe and/or bottom of the shoe), and any shoe that is worn by a player with an artificial limb on his kicking leg must have a kicking surface that conforms to that of a normal kicking shoe. Punters and placekickers may omit the shoe from the kicking foot in preparation for and during kicking plays. Punters and placekickers may wear any combination of tri-colored shoes provided that the colors are consistent with those selected by the team and with the policy listed above.

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| Other Prohibited Equipment, Apparel | <b>Article 4</b> In addition to the several prohibited items of equipment and apparel specified in Article 3 above, the following are also prohibited   |
| Projecting Objects                  | (a) Metal or other hard objects that project from a player's person or uniform, including from his shoes.   |
| Uncovered Hard Objects, Substances  | (b) Hard objects and substances, including but not limited to casts, guards or braces for hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, hip, thigh, knee, shin, unless such items are appropriately covered on all edges and surfaces by a minimum of 3/8-inch foam rubber or similar soft material. Any such item worn to protect an injury must be reported by the applicable coaching staff to the Umpire in advance of the game, and a description of the injury must be provided. If the Umpire determines that an item in question, including tape or bandages on hands or forearms, may present undue risk to other players, he may prevent its use at a time before or during a game until the item is removed or appropriately corrected. |
| Detachable Toe                      | (c) Detachable kicking toe.   |
| Torn Items                          | (d) Torn or improperly fitting equipment creating a risk of injury to other players, e.g. the hard surfaces of shoulder pads exposed by a damaged jersey.   |
| Improper Cleats                     | (e) Shoe cleats made of aluminum or other material that may chip, fracture, or develop a cutting edge. Conical cleats with  |

concave sides or points which measure less than 3/8-inch in diameter at the tips, or cleats with oblong ends which measure less than 1/4- by 3/4-inch at the end tips are also prohibited. Nylon cleats with flat steel tips are permitted.

Improper Tape

(f) Opaque, contrasting-color tape that covers any part of the helmet, jersey, pants, stockings, or shoes; transparent tape or tape of the same color as the background material is permissible for use on these items of apparel. Players may use opaque white tape on hands and arms, provided it conforms to 5-3-4(b) above ("Uncovered Hard Objects, Substances") and 5-3-4(h) below ("Approved Glove Color on Linemen"). Opaque tape on shoes is permitted, provided it is the same color as the shoe, and provided it does not carry up into the stocking area.

Items Colored Like Football

(g) Headgear or any other equipment or apparel which, in the opinion of the Referee, may confuse an opponent because of its similarity in color to that of the game football. If such color is worn, it must be broken by stripes or other patterns of sharply contrasting color or colors.

Approved Glove Color

(h) Gloves, wrappings, elbow pads, and other items worn on the arms below or over the jersey sleeves by interior offensive linemen (excluding tight ends) which are of a color different from that which is mandatorily reported to the League office by the club before July 1 each year. Such reported color must be white or other official color of the applicable team, and, once reported, must not be changed throughout that same season. Players at other positions (non-interior linemen) also may wear gloves provided they are NFL-licensed items approved by the League office for wear on the field, and provided they are solid white or a solid color that is an official color of the applicable club. Clubs are not required to designate to the League office by July 1, the color of gloves that will be worn by their non-interior linemen.

Adhesive, Slippery Substances

(i) Adhesive or slippery substances on the body, equipment, or uniform of any player; provided, however, that players may wear gloves with a tackified surface if such tacky substance does not adhere to the football or otherwise cause handling problems for players.

Garments Under Jerseys

(j) Quarterbacks will be allowed to wear under the game jersey a solid color T-shirt, turtleneck, or sweatshirt (consistent with team undergarment color) with sleeves cut to any length, as long as both sleeves are evenly trimmed and the edges are sewn and hemmed. All other players may wear garments under game jerseys only if the undergarment sleeves either (a) do not extend below the sleeves of the jersey; or (b) are full length to the wrist. No other sleeve lengths for garments under jerseys are permitted for players other than quarterbacks. Players may not wear long-sleeved undergarments that include pebble-grip sleeves. Any garments under jerseys that are exposed at the neck or sleeve area and that carry an exposed logo or commercial name must be

licensed by and approved by the League Office for wear on the field (see Article 7). All members of the same team who wear approved undergarments with exposed necks or sleeves must wear the same color on a given day, which color must be white or a solid color that is an official team color (solid means that sleeves must not carry stripes, designs, or team names).

Prohibited  
Headwear  
Coverings

(k) Players are not permitted to wear bandannas, stockings, or other unapproved headwear anywhere on the field during the pregame, game, or postgame periods, even if such items are worn under their helmet

Recommended  
Equipment

**Article 5** It is recommended that all players wear hip pads, thigh pads, and knee pads which reasonably avoid the risk of injury. Unless otherwise provided by individual team policy, it is the players' responsibility and decision whether to follow this recommendation and use such pads. If worn, all three forms of pads listed above must be covered by the outer uniform. Basketball-type knee pads are permitted but must also be covered by the outer uniform.

Optional  
Equipment

**Article 6** Among the types of optional equipment that are permitted to be worn by players are the following:

Rib Protectors

(a) Rib protectors ("flak jackets") under the jersey.

Wrist Bands

(b) Wrist bands, provided they are white or black only.

Towels

(c) Towels, provided they are white licensed towels approved by the League office for use on the playing field. Players are prohibited from adding to these towels personal messages, logos, names, symbols, or illustrations. Such towels also must be attached to or tucked into the front waist of the pants, and must be no larger than 6 x 8 inches (slightly larger size may be issued to quarterbacks, or may be folded to these limits for wearing in games). A player may wear no more than one towel. Players are prohibited from discarding on the playing field any loose towels or other materials used for wiping hands and the football. Streamers or ribbons, regardless of length, hanging from any part of the uniform, including the helmet, are prohibited.

Headwear  
Coverings

(d) When players are on the field, as defined in Article 1, during the pregame, game and post-game periods, they may wear approved caps, approved cold weather gear, or other approved headwear coverings for medical purposes only, as determined by the Commissioner. Any permissible head coverings must be approved by the League office, and if worn under the helmet, no portion may hang from or otherwise be visible outside the helmet.

Logos and  
Commercial  
Identification

**Article 7** Throughout the period on game-day that a player is visible to the stadium and television audience (including in pregame warm-ups, in the bench area, and during postgame interviews in the locker room or on the field), players are prohibited from wearing, displaying, or orally promoting equipment, apparel, or other items that carry commercial names

or logos of companies, unless such commercial identification has been approved in advance by the League office. The size of any approved logo or other commercial identification involved in an agreement between a manufacturer and the League will be modest and unobtrusive, and there is no assurance that it will be visible to the television audience. Subject to any future approved arrangements with a manufacturer and subject to any decision by the Commissioner to suspend enforcement temporarily of this provision governing shoes, visible logos and names of shoes are prohibited, including on the sole of the shoe that may be seen from time to time during the game.

Personal  
Messages

**Article 8** Throughout the period on game-day that a player is visible to the stadium and television audience (including in pregame warm-ups, in the bench area, and during postgame interviews in the locker room or on the field), players are prohibited from wearing, displaying, or otherwise conveying personal messages either in writing or illustration, unless such message has been approved in advance by the League office. Items to celebrate anniversaries or memorable events, or to honor or commemorate individuals, such as helmet decals, and arm bands and jersey patches on players' uniforms, are prohibited unless approved in advance by the League office. All such items must relate to team or League events or personages. The League will not grant permission for any club or player to wear, display, or otherwise convey messages, through helmet decals, arm bands, jersey patches, or other items affixed to game uniforms or equipment, which relate to political activities or causes, other non-football events, causes or campaigns, or charitable causes or campaigns. Further, such armbands and jersey patches must be modest in size, tasteful, non-commercial, and non-controversial; must not be worn for more than one football season; and if approved for use by a specific team, must not be worn by players on other teams in the League.

General  
Appearance

**Article 9** Consistent with the equipment and uniform rules of this Section 3, players must otherwise present a professional and appropriate appearance while before the public on game-day. Among the types of activity that are prohibited are use of tobacco products (smokeless included) while in the bench area and use of facial makeup. The Referee is authorized to use his judgment in determining whether any other unusual appearance or behavior is in violation of this Article 9.

**Penalties:**

**(a) For violation of this Section 3 discovered during pregame warmups or at other times prior to the game, player will be advised to make appropriate correction; if violation is not corrected, player will not be permitted to enter the game.**

**(b) For violation of this Section 3 discovered while player is in game, player will be advised to make appropriate**

correction at the next change of possession; if violation is not corrected, player will not be permitted to enter the game. Provided, however, if the violation involves the competitive aspects of the game (e.g. illegal kicking toe of shoe, an adhesive or slippery substance) player will be suspended immediately upon discovery.

(c) For repeat violation: disqualification from game.

(d) For illegal entry or return of a player suspended under this Section 3: loss of 5 yards from succeeding spot and removal until properly equipped after one down.

(e) For violation of this Section 3 detected in the bench area: player and head coach will be asked to remove the objectionable item, properly equip the player, or otherwise correct the violation. The involved player or players will be disqualified from the game if correction not made promptly.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

*Note 1: In addition to the game-day penalties specified above, the Commissioner may subsequently impose independent disciplinary action on the involved player, up to and including suspension from the team's next succeeding game—preseason, regular season, or postseason, whichever is applicable.*

*Note 2: If a player is suspended for having adhesive or slippery substances on his body, equipment, or uniform, he must remain out of the game for one play, independent if there is a team time out, the two-minute warning, or the end of a period.*

*Note 3: If a player (kicker) is suspended for having an illegal kicking shoe, he must remain out of the game for one play, unless there is a team time out, the two-minute warning, or the end of the period.*

# RULE 6 FREE KICK

## Section 1 Putting Ball in Play

Kickoff **Article 1** A free kick called a kickoff (3-16) puts the ball in play:

- (a) at the start of each half;
- (b) after a Try; and
- (c) after a successful field goal.

Free Kick **Article 2** A free kick also puts the ball in play:

- (a) after a safety (see 3-12-1b);
- (b) when there is a replay for a short free kick (6-2-1); and
- (c) when enforcement for a foul during a free kick is from the previous spot (6-2-5).

*Note: The ball is put in play by a snap in all other cases (7-3-1).*

Spot of Free Kicks

**Article 3** A free kick may be made from any point on or behind the offensive team's free kick line and between inbounds lines. A dropkick, placekick, or punt may be used.

### Exceptions:

- 1) A punt may not be used on a kickoff.
- 2) During a placekick at the kickoff, the kicking team may use a manufactured tee that is 1-inch in height and approved by the league. Once the ball has been placed on the kicking tee, the kicking tee cannot be moved. If this action occurs, the covering officials must stop play and restart the timing process without penalty to the kicking team.

*Note: When the mark of a fair catch is in a side zone, it is considered to be on the inbounds line.*

**Penalty: For illegal kick at free kick: Loss of five yards from previous spot.**

Initial Free-Kick Lines

**Article 4** The initial free kick lines during a given free kick shall be as follows (plus or minus any distance they might be moved because of a distance penalty enforced prior to the kick):

For the kicking team:



- (a) Kickoff—offensive 30
- (b) Safety kick—offensive 20

For the receiving team:

A yard line 10 yards in advance of the offensive team's free-kick line.

*Note: Kicking team's final free-kick line is a yard line through the spot of the ball when kicked.*

**A.R. 6.1** On a kickoff B1 makes a fair catch attempt with three seconds remaining and the score tied. The ball slips through his hands and touches the ground as the receiver falls on the ball.

**Ruling:** No fair catch allowed, as the ball has to be caught (3-9-1). No fair catch option. The ball is in play with the snap if time remains.

**A.R. 6.2** During the dead ball period after a safety by the offensive team, defensive B1 punches an opponent.

**Ruling:** Disqualify B1. The initial free-kick line for the kicking team is the 35 yard line (20 plus 15) and for the receivers it is the kicking team's 45 yard line. No tee is allowed, but a punt is permitted.

**A.R. 6.3** The kicking team is offside on a kickoff following a field goal. The penalty is accepted.

**Ruling:** New free kick lines are set. The kicking team's new free kick line is A25 and the receiving team's is A35. No punt is allowed, but a tee is permitted.

Whistle Prior to a Free Kick

**Article 5** After the referee's whistle prior to a free kick:

- (a) All receiving players (Team B) must be inbounds and behind their line until the ball is kicked.
- (b) All kicking players (Team A) must be inbounds and behind the ball when kicked except the holder of the placekick (3-23) may be beyond the line, and the kicker may be beyond the line but his kicking foot may not be.

Free-Kick Violation

**Penalty: For violation of free kick formation: Loss of five yards from previous spot (14-2-1).**

**A.R. 6.4** On a kickoff after a Try, the kicker (soccer-type) places his non-kicking foot beyond the ball with his kicking foot kicking the ball on the free kick line.

**Ruling:** Legal. (Kicking foot may not be beyond the line.)

**A.R. 6.5** On a kickoff from the A30, the ball bounces to the B35 and then goes backwards out of bounds at the B42.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B42. Not a short free kick.

## **Section 2 Ball in Play After Free Kick**

### Short Free Kick

**Article 1** A free kick is short when it does not go to or across the receiving team's free kick line unless, before doing so, it is first touched by a player of the receiving team, or goes out of bounds. See 11-5-3-Exc.

#### **Penalties:**

**(a) For the first short free kick: Loss of five yards from the previous spot, and rekick must be made.**

**Exception: There will not be a rekick inside the last five minutes of the second half.**

*Note: If there are multiple fouls (including continuing action fouls) by the kicking team during a short free kick, the receiving team can accept the distance penalty that is the most advantageous. This is still to be considered the first short free kick.*

**(b) For the second (or more) consecutive short free kick illegally touched: The receiving team takes possession of the ball at the spot of illegal touch or recovery. If a re-kick is to be made, new free kick lines are set. See 6-3-1 Note.**

Exception: If the ball, without going 20 yards, goes out of bounds the first time an onside kick is attempted, the kicking team is to be penalized five yards and rekick must be made (no declinations). New free-kick lines are set.

**Exception: There will not be a rekick inside the last five minutes of the second half.**

(a) While the receiving team may not waive the kicking team's obligations to rekick, it is not deprived of a choice of distance penalties in case of a multiple foul.

(a) While the receiving team may not waive the kicking team's obligations to rekick, it is not deprived of a choice of distance penalties in case of a multiple foul.

(b) For the second (or more) consecutive onside kick out of bounds: Receiving team takes possession of the ball at the out-of-bounds spot.

**A.R. 6.6** On a kickoff after a field goal, a kicking team player is first to touch the ball on his own 38-yard line (before it goes to or across the receiving team's free kick line). The ball rolls to the kicking team's 42-yard line where a receiving team player falls on it and is downed there.

**Ruling:** Receiving team's ball on the A42-yard line. (Receiving team has option to play or rekick from kicker's 25-yard line.)

**A.R. 6.7** On a kickoff after a field goal, a kicking team player is first to touch the ball on the A38-yard line (before it goes to or across the receivers' restraining line). The ball rolls to the kicker's 43-yard line where a receiving team player picks it up, takes a few steps and fumbles. Kicking team recovers at A40.

**Ruling:** Rekick from kicker's 25. A five-yard penalty from the previous spot for a short free kick (if receiving team didn't fumble and kept possession, it has the option to keep the ball when it is dead).

**A.R. 6.8** A receiving team player first touches a free kick after a Try on the kicking team's 39. The kicking team recovers on its own 38.

**Ruling:** Kicking team's ball on its own 38. No foul as the ball was touched first by a receiving team player. The ball is dead where it is recovered by the kicking team if it is muffed (no possession) by the receiving team.

**A.R. 6.9** A kickoff after a Try is caught in the air by a kicking team player on the kicking team's 41-yard line:

(a) before any touching by the receiving team. A receiving team player could have caught the ball.

**Ruling:** Interference with the opportunity to make a catch. 15-yard penalty from spot of foul, snap only (10-1-4).

(b) before any touching by the receiving team. No receiving team player was near enough to have caught the ball.

**Ruling:** Legal play. A's ball first-and-10 on A41.

**A.R. 6.10** A kickoff from the A30 bounces on the A38 and is in the air when A1 leaps from the A39 and catches the ball on the A41.

**Ruling:** Legal recovery. Not a short free kick, as the ball hit ground and ball was recovered after going 10 yards. A's ball, first-and-10 on A41.

## Recovery

(a) If a free kick is recovered by the receiving team it may advance.

(b) If a free kick (legal or illegal) is recovered by the kicking team, the ball is dead. If the recovery is legal, the kicking team next puts the ball in play at the spot of recovery. Undue advance by the kicking team recovering (legal or illegal) is delay of game (4-3-9 and 11-5-3).

(c) If a free kick is simultaneously recovered by two opposing players, the ball is awarded to the receiving team.

**A.R. 6.11** On a kickoff from the A30, the ball bounces to the A38 where A2 recovers it there. A3 roughs B3 after the play is over.

**Ruling:** Option for Team B. Rekick from kicker's 15 or rekick from kicker's 25. Only one penalty can be enforced.

**A.R. 6.12** Kickoff after a Try goes to the kicking team's A39 and no one attempts to recover.

**Ruling:** Rekick from A25. Penalize five yards.

After Free Kick Ends

**Article 3** All general rules apply when play continues after a free kick (loose ball) ends.

Player Out of Bounds During a Free Kick

**Article 4** No player of the kicking team may touch or recover a kickoff or safety kick before:

(a) it is touched by the receiving team (B) if that kicking team player has been out of bounds during the kick; or

(b) it has crossed the receiving team's restraining line, unless before doing so, it has first been touched by the receiving team.

**Penalty: For illegal touching of a free kick by the kicking team: Loss of five yards from the previous spot. New free-kick lines are set if enforced.**

**A.R. 6.13** During a kickoff a kicking team player (A1) is blocked out of bounds (or steps out of bounds). A receiving team player (B1) muffs the kick and A1 re-enters and recovers the ball on the B48.

**Ruling:** Legal recovery—A's ball first-and-10 on B48.

**A.R. 6.14** During a kickoff a kicking team player (A1) avoids a block and steps out of bounds (or is blocked out). He re-enters and uses his hands in a personal attempt to recover a muff by a

receiving player B1. A1 recovers the ball on the B36.

**Ruling:** Legal recovery—A's ball first-and-10 on B36.

Foul During a  
Free Kick

**Article 5** If there is a foul other than a personal foul (blocking) after a fair-catch signal, fair-catch interference or an invalid fair-catch signal during a free kick, any enforcement, if made, is from the previous spot and the free kick must be made again (10-1-3; 10-1-4; and 10-1-1).

**A.R. 6.15** During a kickoff a kicking team player bats or kicks a ball muffed by the receiving team towards the receiver's goal line. The ball is recovered by the receiving team on its own 5-yard line.

**Ruling:** Previous spot foul. Loss of 10 yards (12-1-6, 7). New free-kick lines are set. Rekick—A20. Option for receivers, but they would take the penalty.

**A.R. 6.16** During a kickoff a kicking team player (A1) is offside. The receiving team returns the ball to its 15-yard line (B15).

**Ruling:** Option for receiving team. Rekick—5-yard penalty or receiving team's ball on B15. New free-kick lines are set if rekick.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Blocking, Use of  
Hands by Kickers  
During Kick

(1) After the ball touches a receiving team player, any player may use his hands or arms on an opponent in an actual legal attempt to recover the ball (12-1-2-Exc. 2).

(2) A kicking team player may not block or use his hands or arms on an opponent within the first 10 yards, if the ball has not gone 10 yards. This is a 10-yard penalty.

(3) If the ball has not gone beyond 10 yards, a kicking team player may block or use his hands or arms on an opponent beyond the first 10 yards.

(4) If the ball has gone beyond 10 yards, a kicking team player may block or use his hands on an opponent within the first 10 yards.

Running Into  
Free Kicker

(5) Running into the kicker by the receiving team before he recovers his balance is a 5- yard penalty.

**A.R. 6.17** On a kickoff after a Try prior to the ball going 10 yards A1 blocks B1 above the waist on the A38. A2 falls on the ball on the A41.

**Ruling:** Rekick from the A20. Kicking team members may not use hands, arms, or body prior to the ball going 10 yards unless ball

was first touched by the receivers.

### **Section 3 Free Kick Out of Bounds or In Touch**

Free Kick Out of  
Bounds

**Article 1** The kicking team may not kick a free kick out of bounds between the goal lines.

Receiving Team  
Last to Touch

**Exception:** If the receiving team is the last one to touch the kick before it goes out of bounds, it is not a foul by the kicking team, and the receiving team next puts the ball in play at the inbounds spot.

#### **Penalties:**

**(a) Receivers' ball 30 yards from the spot of the kick or the team may elect the option of taking possession of the ball at the out-of-bounds spot.**

Free Kick Timing

**A.R. 6.18** A free kick goes 12 yards and is first touched by a receiving team player. A kicking team player then touches the ball before it goes out of bounds on the 50.

**Ruling:** Kicking team player (A) last one to touch ball. Receiver's ball on the 50.

**A.R. 6.19** A free kick is first touched by a kicking team player before it goes 10 yards. A receiving team player touches the ball before it rolls out of bounds on the A43.

**Ruling:** Option for the receiving team. Receiver's ball on the A43 or rekick—5-yard penalty for a short free kick (6-2-1).

**A.R. 6.20** A kickoff crosses the receiver's goal line and a receiving team player muffs the ball in the end zone. The kick is out of bounds on the receiving team's 2-yard line after last touching a kicking team player who tried to recover.

**Ruling:** Receiving team's ball 30 yards from spot of kick. See 6-3-1.

**A.R. 6.21** A kickoff crosses the receiving team's goal line, and a receiving team player muffs the ball in the end zone. The kick rolls out of bounds on the receiving team's 2-yard line without any other player touching the ball.

**Ruling:** Receiving team's ball on its 2-yard line. (No rekick as the receiving team player was the last one to touch the ball).

Free Kick Behind  
Goal Line

**Article 2** Rule 11 governs if a free kick:

(a) goes out of bounds behind the receiving team's goal line;

(b) kickoff or safety kick becomes dead because the ball strikes the receiving team's goal post; or

(c) is downed in the end zone.

**A.R. 6.22** A free kick is muffed by a receiving team player and the ball then rolls into the goal posts. A kicking team player then falls on it in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchback (11-6-1). A ball hitting the goal post is out of bounds.

**A.R. 6.23** A free kick is caught in the end zone by a receiving team player who goes to his 1-yard line, is tackled and fumbles, and the ball rolls into the end zone and hits the goal post. A kicking team player falls on it in the end zone.

**Ruling:** (11-4-1-b). Safety. Ball was out of bounds when it hit the goal post.

# RULE 7 SCRIMMAGE

## Section 1 Necessary Gain on Downs

New Series, First-and-10	<b>Article 1</b> A new series (first-and-10) is awarded to the offensive team when the following conditions exist; subject, however, to the specific rules of enforcement (Rule 12).
Necessary Gain	(a) When, during a given series, the ball is declared dead in possession of offensive team while it is on, above, or across the necessary line, or unless a penalty places it there, or unless a touchback for them results.
Change of Possession	(b) When the ball is dead in the field of play in the offense's possession, after having been in the defensive team's possession during the same down.
Defensive Fouls	(c) When a foul is made by the defense, except as otherwise specified (14-8-5), or when an impetus by them results in a touchback for offensive team.
Kick Recovered After Touch	(d) When the kicking team recovers a scrimmage kick anywhere in the field of play after it <i>first</i> has been touched <i>beyond</i> the line by the receivers. See 9-1-6-Note.
Forward Part of Ball Determines Gain	<b>Article 2</b> The <i>forward part of the ball</i> in its position when declared dead in the field of play shall be taken as the determining point in measuring any distance gained. <i>The ball shall not be rotated when measuring.</i>
Entire Ball Out of End Zone	<i>Note: A ball in the end zone which is carried toward the field of play is still in touch. It is a safety or touchback if any part of the ball is on, above, or behind the goal line (plane) when dead. In such a case, the ball must be entirely in the field of play in order not to be in touch.</i> <b>A.R. 7.1</b> Second-and-10 on B30. Runner A1 goes to the B25 where he is tackled, fumbles, and defensive player B1 recovers and runs to B28. B1 fumbles and A2 recovers on the B28 where he is downed. <b>Ruling:</b> A's ball first-and-10 on B28. The ball is dead in the offensive team's possession after having been in the defensive team's possession during same down. <b>A.R. 7.2</b> Second-and-10 on B30. Quarterback A1 throws an incomplete pass. Defensive tackle held the tight end A2 on the line of scrimmage. <b>Ruling:</b> A's ball first-and-10 on B25. Foul by defense is automatic first down for offensive team unless otherwise specified in 14-8-5. <b>A.R. 7.3</b> Fourth-and-10 on A30. A punted ball is muffed by receiver B1 on the B35. A kicking team player A1 recovers on the



B30.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on the B30. Kicking team recovers kick first touched by receiver beyond line. The ball is dead when recovered by A1 (9-1-6-Note).

**A.R. 7.4** Fourth-and-10 on A30. Punt is first touched by kicking team player A1 on B35 and then muffed by receiver B1. Kicker A2 recovers on B30.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B35. Illegal touch. It was first touched by the kickers and not the receiving team (9-1-4).

**A.R. 7.5** Fourth-and-10 on A30. A punt is blocked and rolls beyond line to A35 where receiver B1 tries to recover but muffs it back to the A28 where kicker A1 falls on it.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on A28. Ball first touched beyond line by receiver (9-1-6-Note).

No First Down for  
Offense

**Article 3** If offensive team fails to advance ball to necessary line during a given series, it is awarded to defensive team for a new series at the spot:

(a) where dead at end of fourth down; or

(b) where it is placed because of a combination penalty (14-8-2) or a touchback for defensive team.

**Exceptions:** Ball is not awarded to defensive team when fourth down results either in:

(a) a safety by the offensive team; or

(b) a touchback for the offensive team.

## **Section 2 Position of Players at Snap**

Seven Men on  
Line

**Article 1** The offensive team must have:

(a) seven or more players on its line (3-17) at the snap.

(b) all players who are *not* on line, other than the snap receiver under center, must be at least 1-yard behind it at snap, except as provided in 7-2-4.

*Note: Offensive linemen may lock legs.*

**Penalty: For violation of snap formation: Loss of five yards from previous spot.**

**A.R. 7.6** Fourth-and-10 on B35. On a field goal attempt offensive tackle A1 and offensive guard A2 lock their legs as they line up. The field goal is good.

**Ruling:** Field goal good, no foul.

Encroachment,  
Offside, Neutral

**Article 2** After the neutral zone starts, no player of either team at snap may:

## Zone Infraction

- (a) encroach upon it (3-18); or
- (b) be offside (3-19).

*Note 1: Officials are to blow their whistles immediately whenever a defender moves beyond the neutral zone prior to the snap and continues his charge parallel to or beyond an offensive lineman unabated toward the quarterback or kicker even though no contact is made by a blocker.*

*Note 2: Officials are to blow their whistles immediately whenever a defender enters the neutral zone causing the offensive player(s) in close proximity to react immediately (move). This is a neutral-zone infraction by the defense. If there is no immediate reactional movement by the offensive player(s) in close proximity, there is no foul.*

**Penalty: For encroachment, offside, or a neutral zone infraction: Loss of five yards from previous spot. Number of down and necessary line remain the same.**

### SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Whistle on  
Contact  
  
Initial Action  
Responsible

(1) Unless both teams charge simultaneously, there cannot be a double foul.

(2) If any player crosses his line and contacts an opponent, it is encroaching. *Blow whistle* immediately on contact.

(3) If a defensive player charges into the neutral zone, and the action draws an immediate charge forward by an offensive player in close proximity, the action by the defense is a neutral-zone infraction.

(4) If a player charges into neutral zone without violating items (2) and (3), and returns to a legal position prior to the snap, it is not encroaching unless it is a repeated act after a warning.

**A.R. 7.7** Second-and-10 on B30. Defensive tackle B1's initial charge into neutral zone makes offensive guard A1 directly across from him flinch and draw back.

**Ruling:** Blow the whistle immediately. Penalize B1 for a neutral zone infraction. A's ball second-and-5 on B25.

**A.R. 7.8** Second-and-10 on B30. Defensive back B1 runs toward the line of scrimmage as if he is going right over guard A1. He stops on the defensive side of the neutral zone but guard A1 in a three-point stance picks up.

**Ruling:** Penalize offensive A1 for false start. A's ball second-and-15 on B35. Blow the whistle immediately.

**A.R. 7.9** Second-and-10 on A30. Defensive player B1 jumps across the line and contacts offensive player A1 prior to the snap.

**Ruling:** Blow whistle immediately and kill play. A's ball second-and-five on A35.

**A.R. 7.10** Second-and-10 on B35. The offensive team uses a double shift (first, second, or third time during the game). At the start of the second shift, a defensive player B1 charges into the neutral zone and is in the neutral zone at the snap.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-5 from B30. Defense offside.

**A.R. 7.11** Second-and-5 on 50. The offensive team uses a double shift. At the start of the second shift, defensive player B1 charges into the neutral zone and makes contact.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on B45. Encroachment.

**A.R. 7.12** Third-and-7 on B25. Offensive upback A2 moves abruptly (simulating the snap) when he goes in motion prior to the snap.

**Ruling:** A's ball third-and-12 on B30. Blow whistle immediately. False start.

Reporting  
Change of  
Position

**Article 3** An offensive player who comes into game wearing an illegal number for the position he takes must report to the referee who in turn will report same to the defensive captain. The clock shall not be stopped and the ball may not be put in play until the referee takes his normal position.

**Penalties:**

Failure to Report

**a) Five yards for illegal substitution if player in above category enters the game and/or his team's huddle without reporting and later reports his player position status to the Referee prior to snap.**

**b) For failure to notify Referee of change in eligibility or ineligibility status (when required) prior to snap: Loss of five yards for illegal substitution.**

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) It is not necessary for entering substitutes or players legally in the game to report to the Referee under the following conditions:

Legal Position  
Changes

a) players wearing eligible pass receiver numbers playing in eligible pass receiver positions; or

b) players wearing ineligible pass receiver numbers playing in ineligible pass receiver positions.

(2) When a player is legally designated (Referee informed) as being eligible or ineligible (Article 3), he must participate in such a position until legally withdrawn. If the player remains in this position, he must report on every play.

Player Returning  
to Original

**Exception:** If the change in playing position status is followed by:  
1) a touchdown; 2) a completed kick from scrimmage (a punt,

Position	<p>drop kick, or place kick); 3) a foul; 4) a team time out; 5) the end of a quarter; 6) time out for the two-minute warning; or 7) change of possession, the said player may return to his originally eligible or ineligible playing position without restriction. However, if the kick is not completed or a touchdown not made, the said player must remain in his new position until legally withdrawn for one down (5-1-5). If withdrawn, he is to re-enter to the position indicated by his number unless he again informs the Referee that he is assuming a position other than that designated by his number.</p>
Notify Referee on Position Change	<p>(3) Coaches must instruct those players wearing numbers not qualifying them for designated positions to report to the Referee, <i>prior to the huddle</i>, their change in eligibility or ineligibility status. This rule prevails whether player is already in the game or is an entering substitute and whether it is a play from scrimmage; an attempted field goal; or a Try after touchdown.</p> <p>(4) The Referee especially must be alert to the above situation at all times and be certain that the defensive captain is notified of the change of any player position status.</p> <p><b>Article 4</b> At the snap, a center, guard, or tackle of the offensive team may be anywhere on his line, but he may not be behind it unless he is at least 1-yard behind it and has informed the Referee of his change of position to that of an eligible receiver (7-2-3).</p> <p><b>Penalty: For center, guard, or tackle not on the line at the snap: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.</b></p> <p><b>A.R. 7.13</b> Offensive tackle A1 is legally shifted to the backfield and is then withdrawn. He returns before the next snap to a tackle position.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> Illegal. He must stay out one play, or have his team request a team time out. See 5-2-1-S.N.6 and 7-2-3-Exc.</p>
Player Movement at Snap	<p><b>Article 5</b> At the snap, all offensive players must be stationary in their positions:</p> <p>(a) without any movement of feet, head, or arms;</p> <p>(b) without swaying of body; and</p> <p>(c) without moving directly forward <i>except that one</i> player only and he, playing in a backfield position, may be in motion provided he is moving, parallel to, obliquely backward from, or directly backward from the line of scrimmage at snap.</p>
Illegal Motion	<p><i>Note 1: No player is ever permitted to be moving obliquely or directly forward toward his opponent's goal line at snap.</i></p> <p><i>Note 2: Non-abrupt movement of head and/or shoulders by offensive players prior to the snap is legal. Players must come to a stop before ball is snapped. If officials judge the action of the offensive players to be abrupt, false start foul is to be called.</i></p>

**Penalty: For player illegally in motion at snap: Loss of five yards from previous spot. In case of doubt, this penalty shall be enforced.**

**A.R. 7.14** Third-and-one on the B40. Quarterback A1 stops about a foot behind the center and then moves forward and takes the snap and goes to the B38.

**Ruling:** Illegal motion. Can't be moving forward at snap. A's ball third-and-six on B45.

**A.R. 7.15** At the snap offensive back A1 is on the line of scrimmage and in motion along line.

**Ruling:** A1 is illegally in motion as he was not playing a backfield position.

**A.R. 7.16** The offensive Team A has eight players on the line. End A1 on line runs behind line to lead interference and at the snap is 3 yards behind the line.

**Ruling:** Illegal motion as end A1 was not playing in a backfield position at the snap. The distance behind the line at the snap has no bearing on the validity of this situation.

**A.R. 7.17** After a huddle or shift, offensive halfback A1 assumes a position on the end of the line and offensive end A2 assumes a position 1 yard behind the line (no change in their eligibility status). End A2 only in motion parallel to line at snap.

**Ruling:** End A2 legally in motion as he was playing in a backfield position at the snap.

**A.R. 7.18** After a huddle or shift offensive halfback A1 assumes a position on the end of the line and offensive end A2 assumes a position 1 yard behind the line (no change in their eligibility status). Halfback A1 only is in motion parallel to line at snap.

**Ruling:** A1 illegally in motion as he was not playing in a backfield position at the snap.

Complete Stop  
One Second

**Article 6** After a shift or huddle all offensive players after assuming a set position must come to an absolute stop. They also must remain stationary in their position without any movement of their feet, head or arms, or swaying of their body for a period of at least one second before snap.

**Penalty: For illegal pause or motion after a shift: Loss of five yards from previous spot. In case of doubt the penalty is to be enforced.**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) A single man in motion is not a shift, but if he is moving directly forward at the snap, it is illegal motion (7-2-5-c).

(2) After a shift if all players come to a legal stop and then one or more men start again before snap, the play may result in

encroaching (7-2-2), illegal motion (7-2-5), a second shift (7-2-6), or a false start (7-3-4).

**A.R. 7.19** Team A shifts and comes to a stop for one second. Offensive End A1 then goes out along his line and stops. Back A2 then moves backward and the ball is snapped less than one second after End A1 stops.

**Ruling:** Legal play. Movement of End A1 and Back A2 are not simultaneous.

**A.R. 7.20** After a shift or a huddle the offensive players come to a stop and remain stationary. Before the lapse of 1 second Back A1, who did not shift or huddle, starts and is in motion backward at snap.

**Ruling:** Illegal shift. All eleven players must come to an absolute stop for 1 second.

**A.R. 7.21** After a legal pause following a shift:

(a) offensive Backs A1 and A2 move forward just prior to snap. They regain their positions and are stationary at the snap.

**Ruling:** A second shift and 1 second rule again applies.

(b) offensive Back A1 charges forward just prior to snap. He regains his position at snap but B1 contacts Guard A3 as a result of the movement of A1.

**Ruling:** Loss of five yards from previous spot against A1 for false start. Blow whistle on contact.

**A.R. 7.22** Following a shift or huddle all offensive players except offensive Tackle A1 make a legal pause prior to snap. Tackle A1 moves into the neutral zone but regains a stationary position less than 1 second prior to snap.

**Ruling:** Illegal shift unless Tackle A1 is penalized for false start.

Out of Bounds at Snap

**Article 7** No player may be out of bounds at the snap.

**Penalty: For player out of bounds at snap: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.**

### **Section 3 Putting the Ball in Play**

Put Ball in Play

**Article 1** The offensive team must put the ball in play with a snap at the spot where the previous down ended, unless the down ended outside the inbounds lines, at which time the ball is put in play by a snap at the nearest inbounds line. If a fair-catch kick is chosen after a fair catch, 10-1-6 and 11-5-3 apply.

**Penalty: For not using a snap when prescribed: Loss of five yards.**

No Snap Until

**Article 2** When a foul occurs, the ball shall *not* be put in play

Enforcement again until the penalty (Rule 14):

- (a) has been enforced;
- (b) declined;
- (c) offset;
- (d) been annulled by a choice; or
- (e) disregarded.

Snap Provisions **Article 3** The snap (3-31) may be made by any offensive player who is on the line but must conform to the following provisions:

- (a) The snap must start with ball on ground with its long axis horizontal and at right angles to line, and
- (b) The impulse must be given by one quick and continuous motion of hand or hands of snapper. The ball must actually leave or be taken from his hands during this motion.
- (c) The snapper may *not*:

Snapper  
Restrictions

- (1) move his feet abruptly from the start of snap until the ball has left his hands;
- (2) have quick plays after the neutral zone starts if the Referee has not had a reasonable time to assume his normal stance. The ball remains dead. No penalty unless for a repeated act after a warning (delay of game).

**Penalty: For illegally snapping ball: Loss of five yards from spot of snap for false start.**

False Start

**Article 4** From the start of the neutral zone until the snap, no offensive player, if he assumed a set position, shall charge or move in such a way as to simulate the start of a play (false start).

**Penalty: For false start: Loss of five yards from previous spot.**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Movement of  
Interior Linemen

(1) When interior lineman of the offensive team (tackle to tackle) takes or simulates a three-point stance and then moves after taking that stance, the offensive team shall be penalized for a false start. The official *must* blow his whistle immediately.

(2) The penalty for a false start (Article 4) shall be enforced regardless of whether snap is made. The distance penalty for the false start may be declined.

No Offensive  
Movement

(3) Any quick, abrupt movement by a single offensive player or by several offensive players in unison, which simulates the start of the snap is a false start.

**Exception:** This does not apply to an offensive player under the center who turns his head or shoulders (only) provided he

Extension of  
Hands

receives a hand-to-hand snap. Any obvious attempt by the quarterback to draw an opponent offside is a false-start penalty.

(4) Any extension of hands by a player under center as if to receive the snap is a false start unless, while under center, he receives the snap. This includes any player under or behind the center placing his hands on his knees or on the body of the center. It is legal for a player under center who has extended his hands to legally go in motion. If the action draws an immediate reaction from opponent(s), who is in close proximity, it is a false start. If a quarterback goes in motion, he must come to a complete stop prior to the ball being snapped.

(5) Any offensive backfield player, not under center, including a kicker or a place kick holder who extends his hands, does not have to receive the snap, nor must he retract them prior to the snap.

**A.R. 7.23** Second-and-10 on the B40. Quarterback A1 bobs his head in an exaggerated manner prior to the snap and draws the defense into the neutral zone.

**Ruling:** Penalize five yards for false start. Blow the whistle immediately.

**A.R. 7.24** Second-and-10 on A30. Offensive interior lineman A1 simulates a three-point stance after a huddle. He then moves to a regular three-point stance. Defensive player charges and contacts player not directly opposite him.

**Ruling:** False start against offense. Blow whistle immediately to kill play. Defensive action ignored. A's ball second-and-15 on A25.

**A.R. 7.25** Second-and-10 on A30. Offensive team breaks from huddle and all linemen except Tackle A1 assume a three-point stance. Tackle A1 rests his elbows on his knees in a crouched position. After a second A1 assumes a three-point stance. When he started his move to a three-point stance defensive B1 charges across line and contacts Tackle A1.

**Ruling:** Penalize B1 for encroachment. A1's move was legal. Blow the whistle immediately. A's ball second-and-five on A35.

**A.R. 7.26** Second-and-10 on A30. Offensive interior lineman moves his feet abruptly after taking a three-point stance to make himself more comfortable. The ball is then snapped and defensive player B1 gets quarterback A2 to fumble and B1 recovers on A25.

**Ruling:** False start. Blow whistle immediately on lineman's movement.

**A.R. 7.27** Third-and-10 on A30. Offensive quarterback A1 places his hands on side of snapper. Ball goes through A1's legs to Back A2 who completes a pass to the A40.

**Ruling:** False start. Five-yard penalty. Snap must go to quarterback A1. A's ball third- and-15 on A25. Blow whistle



immediately.

**A.R. 7.28** The offensive team comes out of a huddle into a T formation. Quarterback A1 extends his hands under the center, after which the offensive team shifts into a spread formation, with Quarterback A1 assuming a blocking halfback position. Offensive back A2 assumes a tailback position with hands extended for the snap. During the shift into the spread formation by the offensive team, defensive B1 is drawn offside.

**Ruling:** False start against the offensive team. Blow whistle immediately. Loss of five yards. If the defensive team were not offside, it would be a legal play.

Defense Cannot Touch Ball

**Article 5** Prior to the snap no defensive player shall enter the neutral zone and touch the ball.

**Penalty: For actions interfering with the ball prior to or during the snap: Loss of five yards for delay from the previous spot. Blow whistle immediately on contact.**

Legal Snap

**Article 6** The snap must be to a player who was *not* on his line at the snap, unless it has first struck the ground. The play continues as after any other backward pass 8-4-1-Exc.) if the snap either:

- (a) first touches the ground; or
- (b) first touched or is caught by an eligible backfield receiver.

**Penalty: For snapping to ineligible snap receiver: Blow whistle. Loss of five yards from the previous spot.**

**A.R. 7.29** Fourth-and-10 on A30. The snap first touches the ground and goes off kicker A1's hands. A defensive player picks it up on the A20 and scores.

**Ruling:** Touchdown (8-4-1).

**A.R. 7.30** Fourth-and-10 on A30. Snap is high and punter A1 jumps high and muffs the ball, which rolls to the A20. A defensive player B1 picks up the ball on the A20 and scores.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. (8-4-1).

Snap at Inbounds Spot

**Article 7** Ball is next put in play (snap) at inbounds spot by the team entitled to possession (7-1-1 and 3; and 7-3-1) when:

- (a) a loose ball is out of bounds between goal lines;
- (b) a runner is out of bounds between goal lines;
- (c) the ball is dead in a side zone;
- (d) the ball is placed there as the result of an enforcement; or
- (e) the mark of a fair catch is in a side zone (6-1-3-Note).

**Exceptions:** The ball is next put in play at the previous spot if:

- (a) a forward pass goes out of bounds;
- (b) a forward pass falls incomplete; or
- (c) a foul by the defense occurs in a side zone during an unsuccessful Try.

**Section 4 Dead Ball**

**Dead Ball Declared** **Article 1** An official shall declare dead ball and the down ended:

- (a) when a runner is out of bounds or declares himself down by falling to the ground and makes no effort to advance.
  - Quarterback Kneel** (b) any time a quarterback immediately drops to his knee (or simulates dropping his knee) to the ground behind the line of scrimmage during the last two minutes of a half. The game clock will not stop during this action.
  - Runner Slide Feet First** (c) whenever a runner declares himself down by sliding feet first on the ground. The ball is dead at the spot of the ball at the instant the runner so touches the ground.
  - (d) when a runner is so held or otherwise restrained that his forward progress ends.
  - Contacted by Defense** (e) when a runner is contacted by a defensive player and he touches the ground with any part of his body except his hands or feet, ball shall be declared dead immediately.
- Note: The ball is dead at the spot of the ball at the instant the runner so touches the ground, irrespective of the condition of the field. A runner touching the ground with his hands or feet while in the grasp of an opponent may continue to advance.*
- Grabbing of Ball From Player** (f) when an opponent takes a ball (hand in hand) in possession of a runner who is down on the ground.
  - (g) when any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete (8-1-5).
  - (h) when any legal kick touches receivers' goal posts or crossbar unless it later scores a goal from field (9-1-14).
  - (i) when any scrimmage kick crosses receivers' goal line from the impetus of kick and no attempt is made to run it out, or if it is lying loose in the end zone from the impetus of the kick.
  - (j) when any legal kick or a short free kick is recovered by the kickers, except one kicked from behind line which is recovered behind line (not a Try-kick). See 9-1-4-Note for exception.
  - (k) when defense gains possession during a Try, or a Try-kick ceases to be in play.
  - (l) when a touchdown, touchback, safety, field goal, or Try has been made.
  - (m) when any receiver catches after a fair catch signal (valid or

invalid) before kick is touched in flight by an opponent.

(n) when any official sounds his whistle, even though inadvertently.

(o) when any fourth down fumble by offensive team is recovered or caught by any offensive player other than the fumbling player. See 8-4-2-Exc. and S.N.

(p) when the ball is out of bounds.

*Note: An opponent may take or grab a ball (hand to hand) in possession of a runner provided the runner is on his feet or is airborne.*

**A.R. 7.31** Second-and-10 on A30. Offensive End A1 catches a legal forward pass on the A40 where he is stopped by B1, but A1 breaks away and goes back to the A38 in an attempt to break loose. He is tackled on the A38 by B2.

**Ruling:** A's ball third-and-two on A38. No forward progress is given as he was not stopped. He broke away before he was downed.

**A.R. 7.32** Second-and-10 on A30. Both eligible offensive A1 and defensive B1 leap in the air to catch a forward pass and collide during a legal attempt to catch ball on the 50. A1 catches the pass and falls to the ground.

**Ruling:** Ball is dead at spot. A's ball first-and-10 on the 50.

**A.R. 7.33** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 breaks clear and is on the 50 when he slips and falls down. B1 takes the ball from A1's hands when A1 is on the ground.

**Ruling:** Blow whistle to kill play. May not take ball unless runner is on his feet. A's ball first-and-10 on the 50.

**A.R. 7.34** Second-and-10 on A30. A backward pass from the A25 hits the ground on the A20 where a defensive player recovers and runs for a score.

**Ruling:** Touchdown (8-4-1).

**A.R. 7.35** Second-and-goal on B4. Runner A1 gets to the goal line and ball touches goal line when he is tackled. He fumbles and defensive B1 recovers in end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. Ball dead as soon as ball touches goal line in player possession (11-2-1-a).

Loose Ball  
Becomes Dead

**Article 2** If a loose ball comes to rest anywhere in field and no player attempts to recover, official covering the play should pause momentarily before signaling dead ball (official's time out). Any legal kick is awarded to receivers and any other ball to team last in possession. When awarded to a team behind the goal line, the ball is placed on its 1-yard line. See 7-4-5 and Note.

**A.R. 7.36** Second-and-goal on B2. Runner A1 goes to the line of scrimmage where he is tackled and fumbles. The ball rolls into the end zone when the Referee inadvertently blows his whistle as the ball is loose in the end zone. Defense then falls on the ball.

**Ruling:** Ball dead when whistle blew. A's ball third-and-goal on B1. Place ball on 1-yard line.

**A.R. 7.37** A player recovers a loose ball in play by falling on it. He then arises and advances.

**Ruling:** Legal advance unless he has recovered a legal kick made by his team.

Inadvertent Whistle

**Article 3** If an official inadvertently sounds his whistle during a play, the ball becomes dead immediately:

Whistle During Run

(a) If during a run, it is the offensive team's ball at the spot of the ball at the time of the whistle.

Whistle During Backwards Pass or Fumble

(b) If during a backward pass or fumble, it is the offensive team's ball at the spot of the ball at the time of the whistle. Exception: The ball is placed on the 1-yard line if the whistle sounds when the ball is loose in either end zone.

Whistle During Kick

(c) If during a kick, it is the receiver's ball at the spot of the ball at the time of the whistle.

Whistle During Forward Pass

(d) If during a forward pass from behind the line, the ball reverts to the passers at the previous spot. It is an incomplete pass.

(e) If during a forward pass from beyond the line, the ball reverts to the passers at the spot of the pass. It is an illegal pass. The penalty is assessed from the spot of the pass.

(f) If during a forward pass not from scrimmage, the ball reverts to the passers at the spot of the pass. The penalty is assessed from the spot of the pass.

*Note: Penalty enforcement following play blown dead by an inadvertant whistle is as ordinary for fouls during runs, passes, kicks, fumbles, and backwards passes.*

**A.R. 7.38** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A2 fumbles a handoff from Quarterback A1 on the A25. The ball is on the A22 when the Referee inadvertently blows his whistle.

**Ruling:** A's ball third-and-18 on A22. Offensive team's ball at the spot of the ball at whistle.

**A.R. 7.39** Second-and-five on A30. During a forward pass, while the ball is in the air, the line judge inadvertently blows his whistle. Prior to the whistle Guard A1 held B1 on the A25.

**Ruling:** Option for B. Either an incomplete pass (A's ball third-and-five on A30) or foul for holding against A (second-and-15 on A20). Any enforcement is as ordinary.

**A.R. 7.40** A forward pass first touches ineligible A1 beyond line.

While the pass is still in flight, a whistle sounds. The pass is incomplete.

**Ruling:** Loss of down (decline) or 5 yards from previous spot. See 8-1-5-(e).

Ball Put in Play

**Article 4** When the ball is dead, it is next put in play (7-3-1) at spot designated by official so declaring it. This is usually the spot of the ball when his whistle sounded, but may be some other spot, in case Referee is informed by an official that the ball should have been dead at another spot or in case the rules prescribe otherwise (15-2-3).

Ball Touches Official

**Article 5** The ball is not dead because of touching an official who is inbounds or because of a signal by an official other than a whistle.

*Note: When a foul occurs, any official observing it immediately sounds his whistle if it is one for which ball remains dead or is dead immediately. Otherwise he signals it by means of dropping his flag (15-1-4-Note) at the spot of the foul unless distance precludes it. In such case, he still indicates the foul in the same manner, but approximates spot, and notes any pertinent circumstances. Unless a whistle sounds, ball continues in play until otherwise dead (7-4-1).*

## **Section 5 Possession of Ball After Out of Bounds**

Kick Out of Bounds

**Article 1** If any kick, except for a free kick, is out of bounds between the goal lines, ball is next put in play at inbounds spot by the receivers, *unless* there is a spot of illegal touching nearer kickers' goal line. For free kick out of bounds, see 6-3-1.

Fourth Down Out of Bounds

**Article 2** If it is a play from scrimmage, any possession by offensive team after an out of bounds during fourth down is governed by the location of the necessary line (7-1-3).

Runner Out of Bounds

**Article 3** If a runner (3-27) is out of bounds between goal lines, the ball is next put in play by his team at inbounds spot.

Forward Pass Out of Bounds

**Article 4** If a forward pass is out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball is next put in play by passing team as provided for an incompletion or for an illegal pass. See 8-1-5.

Backward Pass Out of Bounds

**Article 5** If a backward pass is out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball is next in play at the inbounds spot by the team last in possession.

Fumble Not Recovered

**Article 6** A fumble by the offensive team cannot result in an advance by that team if the ball is not recovered in the field of play or end zone.

(a) A fumble that goes forward and out of bounds is to return to that team at the spot of the fumble.

Fumble Out of Bounds and

*Note: If, on a play from scrimmage, a fumble goes out of bounds forward, the game clock is to be stopped but is to be restarted*

Clock

*when the ball can be made ready for play at the spot of the fumble. If the ball goes out of bounds behind the spot of the fumble, game clock is to be stopped and is to be restarted when the ball is snapped for the next down.*

(b) A fumble in the field of play that goes backward and out of bounds belongs to the offense at the out-of-bounds spot.

Fumble Out of Bounds in End Zone

(c) A fumble in the field of play that goes forward into the opponent's end zone and over the end line or sideline results in the ball being given over to the defensive team and a touchback awarded.

(d) A fumble which occurs in a team's own end zone and goes forward into the field of play and out of bounds will result in a safety *if that team provided the impetus that put the ball into the end zone. If the impetus was provided by the opponent, the play will result in a touchback.*

(e) A fumble which occurs in a team's own end zone or in the field of play and the ball goes out of bounds in the end zone will result in a safety *if that team provided the impetus that put the ball into the end zone. If the impetus was provided by the opponent, the play will result in a touchback.*

**A.R. 7.41** Second-and-goal on B4. Runner A1 fumbles at line of scrimmage where ball rolls out of bounds:

a) at 1-yard line.

**Ruling:** A's ball third-and-goal on B4.

b) over end line.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B20.

**A.R. 7.42** Second-and-14 on A2. Runner A1 fumbles in end zone. Ball rolls out of bounds.

a) at 1-yard line.

**Ruling:** Safety

b) in end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety

**A.R. 7.43** Second-and-14 on A2. B1 intercepts a forward pass on the A20, runs to the A3, and fumbles. The ball rolls into the end zone. A1 picks up the ball in the end zone, is tackled there, and fumbles ball in end zone. The ball rolls out of bounds over the end line.

**Ruling:** Touchback; A's ball—first-and-10 on A20. (See 7-5-6-(e)).

**A.R. 7.44** Third-and-12 on B22. B1 intercepts forward pass in end zone. Tries to run it out and fumbles in end zone. Ball rolls out of bounds:

a) on B3.

**Ruling:** Touchback (see 7-5-6-(d))

b) over the end line

**Ruling:** Touchback (see 7-5-6-(d))

Out of Bounds  
Behind Goal Line

**Article 7** If a pass, kick, or fumble is out of bounds behind a goal line, Rule 11 governs.

# RULE 8 FORWARD PASS, BACKWARD PASS, FUMBLE

## Section 1 Forward Pass

One Forward  
Pass Legal

**Article 1** The offensive team may make *one* forward pass from behind the line during each play from scrimmage provided the ball does not cross the line and return behind line prior to the pass.

(a) Any other forward pass by either team is illegal and is a foul by the passing team.

(b) When any illegal pass is intercepted, the ball may be advanced and the penalty declined.

Illegal Pass

**Penalties:**

Caught or  
Intercepted.

**a) For a forward pass not from scrimmage: Loss of five yards from the spot of the pass. It is a safety when the spot of the pass is behind the passer's goal line.**

**b) For a second forward pass from behind line, or for a pass that was thrown *after* the ball returned behind the line: Loss of five yards from the previous spot. Note: See 8-3-1 for intentional grounding.**

**c) For a forward pass from beyond the line: Loss of down and five yards from the spot of the pass (combination penalty). See 14-8-2. See S.N. 3 below.**

## SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

(1) Eligibility, pass interference, and intentional grounding rules apply to a second pass from behind the line or a forward pass that was thrown from behind the line after the ball returned behind the line. On all other illegal passes, eligibility rules do not apply.

(2) Roughing the passer rules apply on all passes (legal or illegal) from behind the line of scrimmage (12-2-11).

(3) The penalty for a forward pass beyond the line is to be enforced from the spot where the ball is released when the passer's entire body and the ball are beyond the line of scrimmage. This includes either when the passer is airborne or touching the ground.

Necessary  
Yardage

(4) When a distance penalty in Penalty c) leaves the ball in advance of the necessary line, it is first-and-10 for the offensive team.

Intentional  
Fumble Forward

(5) An intentional fumble forward is a forward pass. See 8-4-2-Exc. 1.

Incomplete Illegal

(6) For when any legal or illegal pass becomes incomplete, see



## Passes

8-1-5.

(7) For team possession during a forward pass (loose ball) or when it ends, see 3-2-3.

**A.R. 8.1** Second-and-10 on A40. A forward pass is batted back by a defensive player. The ball goes back in the air to the quarterback behind his line. He throws it again to his end who catches it on the B40 and goes for a score.

**Ruling:** No score. Second-and-15 on A35.

**A.R. 8.2** Second-and-18 on A4. A second forward pass from behind the line is caught by offensive end A1 in his end zone. He is downed in his end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety. Safety kick A20 or second-and-20 on A2.

**A.R. 8.3** Second-and-10 on A40. A second forward pass from behind the line is intercepted by the defensive team at midfield. A defensive player returns it for a touchdown.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. Illegal passes may be caught or intercepted.

**A.R. 8.4** A punt is caught on the receiving team's 20-yard line. The player who caught the ball attempts to throw a backward pass, but the ball goes forward and hits the ground. The kicking team falls on it.

**Ruling:** Illegal forward pass. The ball is dead when it hits the ground. Penalize from the spot of the pass. B's ball first-and-10 on B15 (8-1-1-Pen. a). B's ball first-and-10 on B15.

**A.R. 8.5** A forward pass is intercepted by a defensive player in his end zone. While in the end zone, he attempts to pass backward. The pass goes forward, hits the ground on the 1-yard line and is recovered by the first passing team.

**Ruling:** Safety. Forward pass not from scrimmage in the end zone.

**A.R. 8.6** Third-and-10 on B35. A second forward pass is thrown from behind the line to flanker A1. Defensive player B1 interferes with A1 on the B20, but A1 catches it anyway and is downed on the B20.

**Ruling:** Double foul. Illegal pass by the offensive team and interference by the defensive team. Interference rules apply on the second forward pass from behind the line(14-3-1). A's ball third-and-10 on B35 (replay).

**A.R. 8.7** Third-and-15 on A30. During a forward pass from beyond the line on the A40, offensive player A1 clips on the A40. The pass is incomplete.

**Ruling:** Choice for defensive team. Loss of down and five from the spot of the pass or loss of 15 from the spot of the pass (unless offensive player fouls behind that spot— spot of foul). A's ball

fourth-and-10 on A35 or third-and-20 on A25.

**A.R. 8.8** Third-and-15 on A30. During a forward pass from beyond the line on the A40, defensive player B1 clips on the A40. The ball falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** Double foul (14-3-1). Replay at the previous spot. A's ball third-and-15 on A30.

Legal Touching  
of Forward Pass

**Article 2** A forward pass from behind the line may be touched or caught by any eligible player. (Pass in flight may be tipped, batted, or deflected in any direction by any eligible player at any time. See 12-1-6-Exc. and Note).

Eligible  
Receivers

(a) Defensive players are eligible at all times.

(b) Offensive players who are on either end of the line (other than a center, guard, or tackle) are eligible. See 5-1-4 and 7-2-4.

(c) Offensive players who are at least (legally) one yard behind the line at the snap are eligible, except T-formation quarterbacks. See 7-2-4.

Eligibility Lost

**Article 3** An eligible receiver becomes ineligible if he goes out of bounds (prior to or during a pass) and remains ineligible until an eligible receiver or any defensive player touches the pass.

**Exception:** If the eligible receiver is forced out of bounds because of a foul by a defender, including illegal contact, defensive holding, or defensive pass interference, he will become eligible to legally touch the pass (without prior touching by another eligible receiver or defender) as soon as he legally returns in bounds.

Eligibility  
Regained

*Note: All offensive players become eligible once a pass is touched by an eligible receiver or any defensive players.*

Ineligible  
Receivers

**Article 4** An ineligible offensive player is one who:

(a) was originally ineligible;

(b) loses his eligibility by going out of bounds;

Failure to Report  
Eligibility

(c) fails to notify the referee of being eligible when indicated (7-2-3-Pen.); or

(d) is a T-formation quarterback who, takes his stance behind center,

(1) receives a hand-to-hand pass or snap from him while moving backward;

(2) does not receive a hand-to-hand pass or snap from him and is not legally one yard behind the line of scrimmage; or

(3) ever receives a forward pass (handed or thrown) during a play from scrimmage.

Eligibility for  
T-Formation  
Quarterback

*Note: To become an eligible pass receiver, a T-formation quarterback must assume the position of a backfield player (as in a Shotgun, Single Wing, Double Wing, Box or Spread Formation) at least one yard behind his line at the snap. In case of doubt, the penalty for an ineligible player receiving a forward pass shall be enforced.*

Incomplete Pass

**Article 5** Any forward pass (legal or illegal) becomes incomplete and the ball is dead immediately if the pass strikes the ground or goes out of bounds.

*Note: If there is any question by the covering official(s) if a pass is complete, intercepted, or incomplete, it is to be ruled incomplete.*

Completed  
Passes

**Article 6** A legal forward pass thrown from behind the line is complete and may be advanced if it is:

(a) caught by any offensive player;

(b) caught by any offensive player after it is first touched by any offensive player; or

(c) intercepted by the defense.

*Note: If there is any question by the covering official(s) if a pass is complete, intercepted, or incomplete, it is to be ruled incomplete.*

Illegal Touching  
Forward Pass

**Article 7** It is a foul for illegal touching, if a forward pass (legal or illegal):

(a) first touches or is caught by an ineligible offensive player behind, on, or beyond the forward pass line of scrimmage, or

(b) first touches or is caught by an eligible receiver who had gone out of bounds on his own or had been legally forced out of bounds.

**Penalty: Loss of five yards from previous spot.**

*Note 1: If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is caught by an ineligible offensive player, the ball remains alive.*

*Note 2: If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is caught by an eligible receiver who had gone out of bounds on his own or had been legally forced out of bounds, the ball remains in play.*

*Note 3: See 8-3-1 for intentional grounding.*

*Note 4: If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is illegally touched and then is intercepted by B, the interception is legal. 8-1-2-a.*

*Note 5: If there is illegal touching of a forward pass and also a personal foul for unsportsmanlike conduct by the defensive team, 5 vs. 15 may apply.*

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Muffed Forward  
Handoff

(1) A ball handed forward (no daylight) to an eligible receiver behind the line is treated as a fumble if he muffs it (3-21-2-Exc.). A ball handed forward (no daylight) to an ineligible receiver behind

the line is treated as a forward pass and remains in play when caught (unless intercepted by B in which case the play continues). See 8-1-5 Pen.

Simultaneous Catch

(2) The bat of a pass in flight by any player does not end a pass nor does it change the impetus if the act sends it in touch.

(3) If a pass is caught simultaneously by two eligible opposing players who both retain it, the ball belongs to the passers. It is not a simultaneous catch if a player gains control first and retains control, regardless of subsequent joint control with an opponent. If the ball is muffed after simultaneous touching by two such players, all the players of the passing team become eligible to catch the loose ball.

Both Feet Inbounds

(4) A pass is completed or intercepted if the player has both feet or any other part of his body, except his hands, inbounds prior to and after the catch.

Forced Out of Bounds

(5) A pass is completed or intercepted, or a loose ball recovered, if the player inbounds would have landed inbounds with both feet but is carried or pushed out of bounds while in possession of the ball in the air or before the second foot touches the ground inbounds by an opponent. The player must maintain possession of the ball when he lands out of bounds.

(6) A pass is not intercepted if the defensive player does not have both feet inbounds prior to the interception (as well as after the interception).

*Note: See 11-4-1-Exc., for momentum.*

**A.R. 8.9** Third-and-10 on B40. A forward pass from behind the line goes off eligible offensive end A1's hands and flanker back A2 catches it in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchdown.

**A.R. 8.10** While in midair, a receiver firmly takes hold of a pass, but loses possession of the ball when his shoulder lands on the ground with or without being contacted by an opponent.

**Ruling:** Incomplete pass. Receiver must hold onto the ball when he alights on the ground in order to complete the reception.

**A.R. 8.11** A runner (in full possession of the ball) is contacted by an opponent while he is attempting to gain yardage. The contact causes the runner to hit the ground, at which time the ball comes loose.

**Ruling:** Play is dead when the impact jars the ball loose. No fumble.

**A.R. 8.12** Second-and-15 on A4. A second forward pass from behind the line is caught by eligible end A2 after the ball had touched eligible end A1. He is downed in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety. Safety kick A20 or second-and-17 on A2.

**A.R. 8.13** Third-and-10 on B40. On a legal forward pass, eligible end A1 is blocked out of bounds on the B36. He returns to the field of play, catches pass, and scores.

**Ruling:** No score. The player became an ineligible receiver by going out of bounds. A's ball third-and-15 on B45.

**A.R. 8.14** Third-and-10 on B40. On a legal forward pass, eligible end A1 is legally blocked out of bounds on the B20. He returns to the field of play and catches a pass after a defensive player touched it. He scores.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. Legal play as all ineligible receivers become eligible after the defense touches the ball.

**A.R. 8.15** Third-and-10 on B40. Eligible end A1 touches a legal forward pass on the B35 and the ball is then touched by ineligible receiver A2 on B35. A defensive player intercepts. He runs it back to the B45 where he fumbles and passing Team A recovers.

**Ruling:** Legal touch. A's ball first-and-10 on B45.

**A.R. 8.16** Second-and-five on B20. A forward pass from behind the line barely touches the crossbar. Eligible offensive end A1 catches the ball in the end zone.

**Ruling:** No score. The ball is dead immediately upon touching the crossbar (or goal posts). Loss of down from the previous spot. A's ball third-and-five on B20.

**A.R. 8.17** Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is caught by offensive flanker A1 near the sideline. His second step touches the sideline.

**Ruling:** Incomplete pass. Both feet have to land inbounds. A's ball third-and-10 on B30.

**A.R. 8.18** Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is intercepted by defensive player B1. As he lands with the ball in his possession, he straddles the sideline.

**Ruling:** Incomplete pass. Both feet have to touch inbounds. A's ball third-and-10 on B30.

**A.R. 8.19** Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is caught by offensive flanker A1 near the sideline on the B10. While in the air he is driven out backwards by a defensive player at B11. Neither foot touched inbounds but both feet would have landed inbounds if he weren't driven out.

**Ruling:** Completed pass. A's ball first-and-goal on B10, wind game clock.

**A.R. 8.20** Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is intercepted by defensive player B1 who jumped in from out of bounds to intercept pass. Both feet touch inbounds after

interception.

**Ruling:** Incomplete pass. Both feet have to be inbounds prior to interception. A's ball third-and-10 on B30. See 8-1-6-S.N. 6.

**A.R. 8.21** Second-and-10 on B30. Eligible offensive A1 jumps in air (behind or beyond line) to receive a forward pass and then passes backward to ineligible offensive A2 before he alights.

**Ruling:** Legal catch.

**A.R. 8.22** Second-and-20 on A40. Quarterback A1 receives a hand-to-hand snap from center and hands off to back A2 who runs to his right and throws a legal forward pass from behind the line to Quarterback A1. Quarterback A1 catches the pass on the A38 and runs to the 50.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-25 on A35 or A's ball third-and-10 on 50.

**A.R. 8.23** Second-and-10 on A40. A legal forward pass touches ineligible guard A1 behind the line. The ball is then intercepted by a defensive player who returns it to the A20.

**Ruling:** Pass not incomplete when A1 touched by ball. Pass continues in play. B's ball first-and-10 on A20.

**A.R. 8.24** Second-and-10 on A40. A legal forward pass touches ineligible guard A1 behind the line. The ball is then intercepted by the defensive team which returns it to the A20, fumbles, and the ball is recovered by the passing team at the A18.

**Ruling:** Five-yard penalty for touching ineligible receiver behind the line. A's ball second-and-15 on A35.

**A.R. 8.25** Second-and-10 on A40. A legal forward pass is touched by ineligible guard A1 behind the line and is then caught by eligible back A2 who runs to the 50.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-15 on A35.

**A.R. 8.26** Fourth-and-two on B4. A legal forward pass touches ineligible receiver A1 in the end zone and falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B4 (declined).

**A.R. 8.27** Fourth-and-two on B4. A legal forward pass accidentally touches ineligible receiver A1 on the B3 and falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B4 (declined).

**A.R. 8.28** Second-and-15 on A8. A legal forward pass is batted back by a defensive player and the ball lands in the end zone. A defensive player falls on it in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Incomplete pass. A's ball third-and-15 on A8.

**A.R. 8.29** First-and-10 on A30. A legal forward pass is touched

simultaneously by two opposing eligible players, A1 and B1. The pass goes in the air where ineligible A2 catches it on the A40 and runs to midfield.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on 50.

## **Section 2 Pass Interference/Ineligible Player Downfield**

Pass Interference  
Not Allowed

**Article 1** Pass interference can only occur when there is a forward pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. This applies regardless of whether the pass crosses the line.

Pass Restrictions

- (a) The restriction for the offensive team begins with the snap.
- (b) The restriction for the defensive team begins when the ball leaves the passer's hands.

Ineligible Player  
Downfield

**Article 2** It is a foul when an ineligible offensive player (including a T-formation quarterback), prior to a legal forward pass:

- (a) advances beyond his line, after losing contact with an opponent at the line of scrimmage;
- (b) loses contact with an opponent downfield after the initial charge and then continues to advance or move laterally; or
- (c) moves downfield without contacting an opponent at the line of scrimmage.

*The above restrictions end when the ball leaves the passer's hand.*

*Note: The guideline for officials to use for an ineligible player(s) to be illegally downfield: the offending player must be more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage prior to the pass.*

**Penalty: Ineligible offensive player downfield: loss of 5 yards from previous spot.**

Not Ineligible  
Player Downfield

**Article 3** It is *not* a foul for an ineligible receiver downfield when ineligible receivers:

- (a) block an opponent at the line of scrimmage drives him downfield, loses the block and remains stationary;
- (b) are forced behind their line;
- (c) move laterally behind their line (before or after contact of their initial charge) provided they do not advance *beyond* their line until the ball leaves the passer's hands; or
- (d) have legally crossed their line in blocking an opponent (eligible offensive player A1 may complete a pass between them and the offensive line).

Ineligible Players  
Legally Downfield

**Article 4** *After* the ball leaves the passer's hand, ineligible forward pass receivers can advance:

- (a) from behind their line;

- (b) from their own line; or
- (c) from their initial charge position, provided they do *not* block or contact a defensive player(s) *until* the ball is touched by a player of either team. *Such prior blocking and/or contact is forward pass interference.*

When an ineligible lineman, who has legally crossed his line in blocking an opponent or a T-formation quarterback is touched by a forward pass while beyond his line, enforcement is for Penalty under 8-1-7.

Pass Interference by Either Team

**Article 5** It is pass interference by either team when any player movement beyond the line of scrimmage significantly hinders the progress of an eligible player of such player's opportunity to catch the ball. Offensive pass interference rules apply from the time the ball is snapped until the ball is touched. Defensive pass interference rules apply from the time the ball is thrown until the ball is touched.

Defensive Pass Interference

Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include but are not limited to:

- (a) Contact by a defender who is not playing the ball and such contact restricts the receiver's opportunity to make the catch.
- (b) Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
- (c) Grabbing a receiver's arm(s) in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
- (d) Extending an arm across the body of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of whether the defender is playing the ball.
- (e) Cutting off the path of a receiver by making contact with him without playing the ball.
- (f) Hooking a receiver in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that it causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.

Not Defensive Pass Interference

Actions that do not constitute pass interference include but are not limited to:

- (a) Incidental contact by a defender's hands, arms, or body when both players are competing for the ball, or neither player is looking for the ball. If there is any question whether contact is incidental, the ruling shall be no interference.
- (b) Inadvertent tangling of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball.
- (c) Contact that would normally be considered pass interference, but the pass is clearly uncatchable by the involved players.
- (d) Laying a hand on a receiver that does not restrict the receiver



in an attempt to make a play on the ball.

(e) Contact by a defender who has gained position on a receiver in an attempt to catch the ball.

Offensive Pass Interference

Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to:

(a) Blocking downfield by an offensive player prior to the ball being touched.

(b) Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off thus creating a separation in an attempt to catch a pass.

(c) Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.

Not Offensive Pass Interference

Actions that do not constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to:

(a) Incidental contact by a receiver's hands, arms, or body when both players are competing for the ball or neither player is looking for the ball.

(b) Inadvertent touching of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball.

(c) Contact that would normally be considered pass interference, but the ball is clearly uncatchable by involved players.

Pass Interference Notes

*Note 1:* If there is any question whether player contact is incidental, the ruling should be no interference.

*Note 2:* Defensive players have as much right to the path of the ball as eligible offensive players.

*Note 3:* Pass interference for both teams ends when the pass is touched.

*Note 4:* There can be no pass interference at or behind the line of scrimmage, but defensive actions such as tackling a receiver can still result in a 5-yard penalty for defensive holding, if accepted.

*Note 5:* Whenever a team presents an apparent punting formation, defensive pass interference is not to be called for action on the end man on the line of scrimmage, or an eligible receiver behind the line of scrimmage who is aligned or in motion more than one yard outside the end man on the line. Defensive holding, such as tackling a receiver, still can be called and result in a 5-yard penalty from the previous spot, if accepted. Offensive pass interference rules still apply.

Pass Interference Penalties

**Penalties:**

**(a) Pass interference by offense: Loss of 10 yards from previous spot.**

**(b) Pass interference by defense: First down for offensive team at the spot of any such foul. If the interference is also a**

**personal foul (12-2), the usual distance penalty for such a foul (whether the pass is complete or incomplete) is also enforced (from spot to foul). If the interference is behind the defensive goal line, it is first down for the offensive team on the defense's 1-yard line, or, if the previous spot was inside the 2-yard line, then halfway between the previous spot and the goal line.**

See 8-3-3 and 4 for optional penalty in case of a personal foul (12-2) by opponents prior to any completion or interception.

**A.R. 8.31** Second-and-10 on A30. Center A1 blocks his man and drives him to the A32 where he loses contact. He then moves laterally to his right before the ball is thrown and completed to eligible end A2 who is downed on the A45.

**Ruling:** Ineligible man moved laterally beyond the line after losing contact. Loss of 5 yards. A's ball second-and-15 on A25 (8-2-1).

**A.R. 8.32** Second-and-10 on A30. Ineligible offensive tackle A1 charges, driving lineman B1 back from his line. The pass is completed on the A45.

**Ruling:** Not ineligible player downfield. A's ball first-and-10 on A45 (8-2-1).

**A.R. 8.33** Second-and-10 on A30. On a swing pass from behind the line, a defensive man blocks eligible end A1 on the A32 while the ball is in the air. The pass is incomplete behind the line.

**Ruling:** Defensive pass interference. It is defensive pass interference regardless of whether the pass crosses the line once the ball is thrown. A's ball first-and-10 on A32.

**A.R. 8.34** Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible tight end A1 goes across his line on the snap and blocks defensive player B1 on the A35 before eligible flanker A2 catches it on the A34. Flanker A2 goes to the A45.

**Ruling:** Offensive pass interference. Can't block beyond the line prior to the ball being touched. A's ball second-and-20 on A20.

**A.R. 8.35** Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible offensive player A1 touches the ball on the A45 and the ball goes off his hands. Defensive player B1 then blocks eligible A2 and prevents him from catching the ball on the 50.

**Ruling:** Legal block. The ball was touched. No pass interference. A's ball third-and-10 on A30.

**A.R. 8.36** Second-and-10 on A30. On a quick pass over the center, defensive player B1 touches the ball on the A35 and it goes high in the air. Defensive player B2 is about to catch the ball when offensive end A1 pushes B2 out of the way and catches the ball and goes to the A45.

**Ruling:** Legal play as the ball was touched by the defense. Interference rules ended when defensive player touched the pass.

A's ball first-and-10 on A45.

**A.R. 8.37** Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible offensive player A1 and B1 both make a bona fide attempt to catch a pass on the A45. There is contact between them and the pass falls incomplete on the A45.

**Ruling:** Incomplete pass. Legal play as it was a simultaneous and bona fide attempt by opposing players. A's ball third-and-10 on A30.

**A.R. 8.38** Second-and-10 on A30. Tight end A2 blocks B1 on the A35 as the quarterback is looking for an open receiver. A2 then runs to the 50. The quarterback then throws a pass which A2 catches as no one is near him.

**Ruling:** Offensive pass interference. A's ball second-and-20 on A20.

**A.R. 8.39** Second-and-10 on A30. Defensive player B1, beyond the line, has his back to the ball during a forward pass. He makes no attempt to catch it but waves his arms in close proximity to an eligible opponent on the A45, but there is no contact with receiver.

**Ruling:** No foul. Legal action by defender.

**A.R. 8.40** Fourth-and-1 on B4. Offensive end A1 pushes a defensive player out of the way in the end zone to catch a legal pass.

**Ruling:** Loss of 10 yards from previous spot. A's ball fourth-and-11 on B14.

**A.R. 8.41** Second-and-10 on B30. A defensive player pushes eligible offensive player A1 out of the way in the end zone and catches a pass. He returns it to the 50.

**Ruling:** Defensive pass interference in the defensive end zone. A's ball first-and-goal on B1.

**A.R. 8.42** Fourth-and-10 on B15. On a fake field goal attempt place-kick holder A1 stands up and throws a pass to eligible end A2 who pushes defensive player B1 out of the way in the end zone to catch the pass there.

**Ruling:** Offensive pass interference. A's ball fourth-and-20 on B25.

**A.R. 8.43** Second-and-10 on A30. A defensive player clips eligible offensive player A1 on the A45 as he is about to catch a pass. The pass falls incomplete on the 50.

**Ruling:** Interference is also a personal foul and penalize for both. A's ball first-and-10 on B40.

**A.R. 8.44** Second-and-10 on A30. During a pass, defensive player B1 grabs the face mask of offensive eligible player A1 on the A35. The ball is thrown to the 50 where defensive B2

interferes with eligible A2. The pass falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** Additional yardage would have been tacked on if the personal foul (face mask) was the pass interference at the 50 or if the pass had been completed (8-3-3). A's ball first-and-10 on 50.

**A.R. 8.45** Second-and-10 on A30. On a legal forward pass which is unintentionally thrown too high and too far for End A1 to catch, B1 pushes A1 as the ball is already beyond him and A1 obviously couldn't reach the ball. Ball hits ground 12 yards away from A1.

**Ruling:** No pass interference. Ball was not catchable.

### **Section 3 Fouls on Passes and Enforcement**

#### **Intentional Grounding**

**Article 1** Intentional grounding will be called when a passer, facing an imminent loss of yardage because of pressure from the defense, throws a forward pass without a realistic chance of completion.

*Note 1: Intentional grounding will not be called when a passer, while outside the tackle position and facing an imminent loss of yardage, throws a forward pass that lands near or beyond the line of scrimmage, even if no offensive player(s) have a realistic chance to catch the ball (including if the ball lands out of bounds over the sideline or endline).*

*Note 2: A passer, after delaying his passing action for strategic purposes, is prohibited from throwing the ball to the ground in front of him, even though he is under no pressure from defensive rusher(s).*

*Note 3: A player under center is permitted to stop the game clock legally to save time if immediately upon receiving the snap he begins a continuous throwing motion and throws the ball directly forward into the ground.*

*Note 4: Intentional grounding should not be called if the passer initiates his passing motion toward an eligible receiver and then is significantly affected by physical contact from a defensive player causing the pass to fall incomplete.*

*Note 5: When the ball, either in possession or loose, leaves the area bordered by the tackles, this area no longer exists. All intentional grounding rules apply as if the passer is outside this area (as stated in Note 1 above).*

*Note 6: A realistic chance of completion is defined as a pass that is thrown in the direction and the vicinity of an eligible receiver.*

**Penalty: For intentional grounding: loss of down and 10 yards from the previous spot, or if foul occurs more than 10 yards from line of scrimmage or where it is more advantageous to the defense, loss of down at spot of foul, or safety if passer is in his end zone when ball is thrown.**

**A.R. 8.46** Second-and-20 on A4. A quarterback drops back into

his end zone. Just before he is tackled in his end zone, he intentionally grounds the ball by throwing a pass directly in front of him. A defensive player falls on it.

**Ruling:** Intentional grounding. Safety.

**A.R. 8.47** Second-and-10 on A30. Quarterback intentionally grounds ball forward as he stands on A16 to keep from being tackled.

**Ruling:** Loss of down at spot of foul as quarterback is more than 10 yards behind the line. Third-and-24 on A16.

**A.R. 8.48** Second-and-10 on B20. Quarterback deliberately throws the ball out of bounds to stop the game clock.

**Ruling:** The pass was not thrown away to prevent loss of yardage. A's ball third-and-10 on B20. See 8-3-1-Note 1.

Enforcement  
Spot on Forward  
Pass Fouls

**Article 2** If there is a foul by either team from the time of the snap until a forward pass from behind the line ends, the penalty is enforced from the previous spot.

*Note: A forward pass in flight that is controlled or caught may only be thrown backwards. If thrown forward it is considered illegally batting a loose ball and the penalty is enforced from the previous spot.*

**Exceptions:**

- 1) Pass interference by the defense is enforced from the spot of the foul.
- 2) A personal foul prior to interception or completion of a pass from behind the line, enforcement is from the spot chosen (8-3-3, 4).
- 3) It is a safety when the offensive team commits a foul behind its own goal line.

**A.R. 8.49** Third-and-10 on A30. During a run prior to an incomplete pass, offensive player A1 holds a defensive player on the A25.

**Ruling:** Choice for defense. Fourth-and-10 on A30 or third-and-20 on A20 (from previous spot).

**A.R. 8.50** Third-and-10 on A30. During a run prior to an intended pass by quarterback A1, defensive player B1 holds flanker A2 on the A45. Quarterback A1 doesn't throw the ball and is downed on the A20.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the previous spot. A's ball first-and-10 on A35.

Personal,  
Unsportsmanlike  
Foul Prior to

**Article 3** When the defense commits a personal foul (or unsportsmanlike foul) prior to a completion of a legal forward pass from behind the line, the offense shall have the choice either.

## Completion

- (a) the usual penalty—15 yards from the previous spot; or
- (b) a 15-yard penalty enforced from the spot where the ball is dead.

**Exception:** If the passing team is fouled and loses possession after a completion, enforcement is from the previous spot and the ball will be retained by the offended team after enforcement of the personal foul.

## Personal, Unsportsmanlike Foul Prior to Interception

**Article 4** When the offense commits a personal foul (or unsportsmanlike foul) prior to an interception of a forward pass, the defense will have a 15-yard penalty enforced from the spot where the ball is dead.

**Exception:** If the intercepting team is fouled and loses possession after the interception, enforcement is from the spot where the interception occurred and the ball will be retained by the offended team after the enforcement of the personal foul.

*Note 1: When the dead-ball spot is normally a touchback, enforce from the 20-yard line.*

*Note 2: Personal fouls do not include holding, illegal use of hands, illegal batting, kicking the ball, or tripping. See Rule 12-2.*

**A.R. 8.51** Third-and-10 on A40. Defensive player B1 roughs the passer prior to a pass completion to eligible end A1 on the B45. A1 runs to the B40 where he is downed.

**Ruling:** Personal foul prior to completion of a legal forward pass. Fifteen-yard penalty enforced from the spot where the ball is dead. A's ball first-and-10 on B25.

**A.R. 8.52** Third-and-10 on A40. A defensive player roughs the passer as he throws a short swing pass to back A1 who is downed on the A35. The foul is prior to the completion of the pass.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the previous spot as the usual penalty on a pass. A's ball first- and-10 on B45.

**A.R. 8.53** Third-and-10 on A40. Offensive guard A1 clips defensive player B1 as he tries to reach the passer. B2 intercepts the pass and returns it to the A30.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the spot where the ball is dead. Personal foul prior to interception. B's ball first-and-10 on A15.

**A.R. 8.54** Third-and-10 on A40. Defensive player B1 roughs the passer prior to a completed pass to end A1 on the 50. A1 runs to the B40 where he is tackled, fumbles and the defensive team recovers on the B35.

**Ruling:** Personal foul prior to completion. Enforce from the previous spot and the ball reverts to the offended team. A's ball

first-and-10 on the B45.

**A.R. 8.55** Third-and-10 on A30, B1 intercepts forward pass at B30, runs to the B35, fumbles and team A recovers. Prior to pass, A3 crackbacks on A26.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B45.

**A.R. 8.56** Third-and-10 on A40. Defensive player B1 roughs the passer prior to a completion to eligible end A1 on the B40. A1 goes for a score.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. Loss of 15 on the kickoff. Kick off on A45. See 14-1-14.

#### Defensive Foul and Incomplete Pass

**Article 5** If there is a foul by the defense from the start of the snap until a legal forward pass ends, it is *not* offset by an incompletion by the offensive team.

**Exception:** Any foul by the offensive team would offset a foul by the defensive team (14-3-1).

**A.R. 8.57** Second-and-10 on A30. During a forward pass the ball goes off eligible end A1's fingers and flanker A2 catches it on the B40. The defensive team was offside.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on B40.

**A.R. 8.58** Second-and-10 on A30. A forward pass is caught by ineligible tackle on A28. B1 was offside.

**Ruling:** Penalties offset. Second-and-10 on A30.

**A.R. 8.59** Second-and-10 on A30. A forward pass is caught by ineligible A2 beyond the line. Prior to or during the pass, defensive player B1 strikes A1.

**Ruling:** Disqualify B1. A's ball first-and-10 on A45.

#### Section 4

##### Backward Pass and Fumble

**Article 1** A runner may pass backward at any time (3-21-4).

(a) An offensive player may catch a backward pass or recover it after the pass touches the ground and advance.

(b) A defensive player may catch a backward pass or recover it after the pass touches the ground and advance.

*Note: A direct snap from center is treated as a backward pass. A muffed hand-to-hand snap from center is treated as a fumble by the quarterback.*

**Exception:** See actions to conserve time (4-3-10).

**A.R. 8.60** Third-and-10 on B30. A backward pass hits the ground on the B35. A defensive player recovers it and runs to the B45.

**Ruling:** Legal recovery and advance. B's ball first-and-10 on B45 (8-4-1-b).

Fumble Recovery **Article 2** Any player of either team may recover or catch and advance a fumble:

(a) before the fumble strikes the ground; or

(b) after the fumble strikes the ground.

*Note: A fumble is legally recovered or caught in bounds by a player if the player had both feet in bounds prior to the recovery or catch. See 7-5-6 for fumble out of bounds and 11-4-1-Exc. for a fumble in end zone following intercepting momentum.*

**Exceptions:**

Intentional Fumble 1) If a runner *intentionally* fumbles forward, it is a forward pass (3-21-2-a and Note).

Fourth-Down Fumble and - Legal Advance 2) If a fourth-down fumble occurs during a play from scrimmage and the fumbling player recovers the ball, he only:

a) may advance; or

b) hand and/or pass the ball forward or backward (as prescribed by rule).

Dead Ball on Fourth-Down Fumble 3) If a fourth-down fumble occurs during a play from scrimmage and the recovery or catch is by another offensive player, the spot of the next snap is:

a) the spot of the fumble unless

b) the spot of recovery is behind the spot of the fumble and it is then at the spot of recovery. See 8-4-3.

4) If a fourth-down fumble occurs during a play from scrimmage and the ball rolls out of bounds from field of play, the ball is next put in play at the spot of the fumble, unless the spot of out of bounds is behind the spot of the fumble, then it is at that spot (Rule 7-5-6).

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE**

Fumble After Two-Minute Warning Applies to Both Teams After the two-minute warning, any fumble that occurs during a down (including Try), the fumbled ball may only be advanced by the offensive player who fumbled the ball, or any member of the defensive team. See 11-3-1-b.

**A.R. 8.61** Fourth-and-10 on A40. A high snap from center glances off the kicker's hands as he muffs the ball on the A28. The ball rolls to the A25. A defensive player picks it up and goes for a score.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. (8-4-1-Note).

**A.R. 8.62** A's ball fourth-and-10 on B20. Direct snap from center on an attempted field goal glances off placekick holder's hands at the B27. Field goal kicker recovers the ball at B30 and *runs for a touchdown*.



**Ruling:** Legal touchdown. See 8-4-1-Note.

**A.R. 8.63** Second-and-10 on B14. On last play of game Team A is behind by 4 points. Quarterback A1 falls back to pass, fumbles, and ball eventually winds up in B's end zone. A2 falls on it.

**Ruling:** No score. Game over. See 8-4-2, S.N..

**A.R. 8.64** Fourth-and-four on B9. Offensive player A1 fumbles (forward unintentionally) on the B9. A1 recovers and goes to the B4.

**Ruling:** Legal advance as the fumbling player recovered. A's ball first-and-goal on B4.

**A.R. 8.65** Fourth-and-four on B9. Offensive player A1 fumbles on the B9 (forward unintentionally). His teammate A2 recovers on the B7 and goes to the B4.

**Ruling:** Player other than the fumbling player recovered. The spot of the snap is the spot of the fumble (B9). B's ball first-and-10 on B9.

**A.R. 8.66** Fourth-and-four on B9. Offensive player A1 fumbles on the B9 and A2 recovers on the B12 and goes to the B4.

**Ruling:** Other player than the fumbler recovered and spot of next snap is the spot of recovery as it is behind the spot of the fumble. B's ball first-and-10 on B12.

**A.R. 8.67** Fourth-and-four on B9. Offensive player A1 fumbles on the B9. Defensive player B1 touches the ball and then offensive player A2 recovers on the B7.

**Ruling:** Ball is returned to spot of fumble (B9). B's ball first-and-10 on B9.

**A.R. 8.68** Fourth-and-four on B9. A1 fumbles on the B9 and the ball rolls out of bounds on the B4 without any player touching it.

**Ruling:** The ball is next put in play at the spot of the fumble. B's ball first-and-10 on B9.

Simultaneous Recovery

*Note: When a backward pass or fumble is a simultaneous or hidden ball recovery by two opposing players, the ball is awarded to the team making the pass or fumble.*

Backward Pass Out of Bounds

**Article 3** If a backward pass goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball is next put in play at the inbounds spot by the team in last possession. The ball is dead (7-5-5). Rule 11 governs if a backward pass is declared dead behind the goal line.

Enforcement Spot During Backward Pass or Fumble

**Article 4** When a foul occurs during a backward pass or fumble, the basic spot of enforcement is the spot of the fumble or the spot of the backward pass. If the offensive team fouls behind the spot of the fumble or backward pass, the spot of enforcement is the spot of the foul (14-1-5).

**Exception:** When the spot of the backward pass or fumble is behind the line (including A's end zone) and either team fouls during the loose ball, the spot of enforcement is the previous spot, even if B's foul is in A's end zone. See 11-4-2 for safety (offensive foul in own end zone).

*Note: When the spot of the fumble or backward pass is beyond the line, a defensive foul during the backward pass or fumble occurring anywhere is enforced from the spot of the fumble or backward pass.*

## **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Backward Pass  
or Fumble  
Touching Goal  
Posts

(1) When a backward pass or fumble touches a goal post, ball is dead as it is out of bounds.

(2) For team possession during a backward pass or fumble (loose ball) or when it ends, see 3-2-3 and 3-21-2-Note.

Use of Hands on  
Backward Pass  
or Fumble

(3) After a backward pass or fumble touches the ground, any player may legally block or otherwise use his hands or arms to push or pull an opponent out of the way but only in an actual personal attempt to recover (12-1-2 and 3).

(4) A backward pass going out of bounds during the last two minutes of a half stops the game clock (4-3-10-S.N. 5).

(5) For fumbles forward out of bounds or unrecovered in the field of play or in the end zone, see 7-5-6.

**A.R. 8.69** First-and-10 on A40. Runner A1 advances to the 50 where he passes backward. During the backward pass A2 holds on the A45. The ball goes out of bounds on the A48.

**Ruling:** Enforcement is from the spot of the foul as it is behind the basic spot (14-1-5-d). A's ball first-and-15 on A35.

**A.R. 8.70** Fourth-and-15 on A8. A punt is blocked and the ball is in the end zone when defensive player B1 pushes A1 out of the way to allow his teammate B2 to recover the ball in the end zone.

**Ruling:** The spot of enforcement is the previous spot as the foul by the defense occurred behind this line. A's ball first-and-10 on A13.

**A.R. 8.71** Second-and-10 on B30. Quarterback A1 fumbles on the B32. A defensive player bats the loose ball in flight to the B40 where A1 recovers.

**Ruling:** The enforcement spot is the previous spot as the foul is behind the line. Illegal bat (12-1-6). A's ball first-and-10 on B20.

**A.R. 8.72** Second-and-10 on B30. Quarterback A1 passes backward and a defensive player bats the pass in flight. The ball goes to the B40 where A1 recovers.

**Ruling:** Legal bat (12-1-6-Exc.). A's ball third-and-20 on B40.

**A.R. 8.73** Second-and-10 on B30. A backward pass or fumble hits the ground on the B35 and a defensive player bats the ball to the B40 where he recovers.

**Ruling:** Illegal bat of a loose ball. Enforcement is from the previous spot as it is behind the line. A's ball first-and-10 on B20.

**A.R. 8.74** B1 intercepts a forward pass in his end zone and advances to his 2-yard line where he fumbles. B1 recovers. During the fumble B2 fouls:

a) in his end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety. Enforcement is from the spot of the foul as it is not from scrimmage. See 11-4-2 and 14-1-11-b.

b) on his 5-yard line.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B1. Enforcement is from the spot of the fumble.

**A.R. 8.75** Third-and-15 on B30. B1 intercepts a pass in the end zone and runs it out to the B20 where he throws a backward pass which hits the ground on the B15. A1 recovers on the ground and scores.

**Ruling:** Legal recovery and advance by A1. Touchdown A (8-4-1-b).

**A.R. 8.76** A backward pass or fumble by offensive Team A on its 4-yard line comes to rest on the 2-yard line. Offensive player A1 blocks B1 into the ball and causes it to cross the goal line.

a) A2 recovers in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety if A2 is downed in the end zone. May advance if he can (3-14-3, Note).

b) B2 recovers in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchdown.

**A.R. 8.77** Second-and-10 on B30. A ball is handed forward by quarterback to eligible receiver A2 who is behind his line. Receiver A2 muffs ball and defensive player B recovers on the B35 and goes to the 50.

**Ruling:** Legal advance. It is not a forward pass (3-21-2, Exc.), and it is treated as a fumble. B's ball first-and-10 on 50.

**A.R. 8.78** Second-and-10 on B30. A ball is handed backward (no daylight) to ineligible receiver A1 on the B35. A1 muffs the ball and B1 recovers and goes to the 50.

**Ruling:** Legal recovery. A ball which is handed backward from one player to another (no daylight) and is dropped, shall be treated as a fumble. Either team may recover and advance B's

ball first-and-10 on 50.

# RULE 9 SCRIMMAGE KICK

## Section 1 Kick from Scrimmage

Punt

**Article 1** The kicking team, behind the scrimmage line, may:

- (a) punt;
- (b) dropkick; or
- (c) placekick.

**Penalty: For a punt, dropkick, or placekick not kicked from behind the line of scrimmage: 10 yards from the spot of the kick.**

*Note: This is not considered illegally kicking the ball.*

**A.R. 9.1** The kicking team's punt is blocked and the kicker picks up the ball behind the line of scrimmage and throws a forward pass to end A1.

**Ruling:** Legal play (8-1-1).

**A.R. 9.2** A field goal attempt inside the B20 is blocked and bounces back toward the kicker. The kicker then kicks the loose ball on the ground from behind the line of scrimmage. The ball goes over the crossbar.

**Ruling:** No field goal. Illegal. Option of 10-yard penalty from the previous spot for kicking a loose ball (12-1-7 and 14-1-5-Exc. 1), or touchback (11-6-1-b).

Receivers  
Recover

**Article 2** If the receivers recover any kick, they may advance. For fair catch exception, see 10-1-2.

*Note: For team possession during a scrimmage kick (loose ball) or when it ends, see 3-2-3.*

Players on Line  
During Kick

**Article 3** During a kick from scrimmage, only the end men as eligible receivers on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap, are permitted to go beyond the line before the ball is kicked.

Cover Men on  
Kicks

**Exception:** An eligible receiver who, at the snap, is aligned or in motion behind the line and more than one yard outside the end man on his side of the line clearly making him the outside receiver, *replaces* that end man as the player eligible to go downfield after the snap. All other members of the kicking team must remain at the line of scrimmage until the ball has been

kicked, unless kick is made from beyond the line.

**Penalty: Loss of five yards from the previous spot for leaving before the ball is kicked.**

*Note: The guideline for officials to use for an ineligible player(s) to be illegally downfield: he must be more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage, prior to the kick from scrimmage.*

**A.R. 9.3** Fourth-and-12 on A40. On a poor snap from center, kicker A1 picks up the ball and gets the punt off. B1 catches the ball on the B10, and is tackled by center A2, who had crossed the line of scrimmage prior to the ball being kicked.

**Ruling:** Fourth-and-17 on A35. It is illegal for the center to cross the line prior to the ball being legally kicked. Five-yard penalty from the previous spot. The defensive team would have the option of the ball on the B10, but would decline that option and take the penalty.

Illegal Touching

**Article 4** No player of the kickers may illegally touch a scrimmage kick before it has been touched by a receiver (first touching).

Legal Touching  
by Kickers

**Exception:** When a kick is from behind the line, any touching on or behind the line by any offensive player is legal and any player may recover and advance (See 3-2-27-2, S.N. 2).

**Penalty: For illegal touching of a scrimmage kick: Receivers' ball at any spot of illegal touching or possession. Officials' time out when the ball is declared dead. This illegal touch does not offset a foul by the receivers during the down. See 4-3-1; 4-3-7; and 14-3-1-Exc. 4.**

*Note: When any player of the kicking team (inside the receiver's 5-yard line) illegally recovers or catches a punt or failed field goal attempt kicked from inside the receiver's 20-yard line (See 11-5-1, 2, 3), carries the ball directly across the receiver's goal line or his body contacts the end zone, it is a touchback. There is no penalty for delay. (This creates Exception to 4-3-9-j) and the ball is not dead (7-4-1-j).*

**A.R. 9.4** Fourth-and-10 on A40. A punt rolls to the receiving team's 25-yard line (B25) where a kicking team player illegally touches it. The ball rolls to the B15 where B1 picks it up and returns it to his 20-yard line.

**Ruling:** Receiver's ball on its 25-yard line where the kickers illegally touched it.

**A.R. 9.5** Fourth-and-10 on A40. A punt is illegally touched by A1 on the B30. B1 picks it up, returns to the B35 and fumbles. A1

recovers there.

**Ruling:** B's ball on the B30 where the kicking team illegally first touched.

**A.R. 9.6** Fourth-and-12 on A40. A punt is blocked. The kicker picks up the ball behind the line of scrimmage on the A30 and advances to midfield.

**Ruling:** Legal recovery and advance. Didn't make yardage for a first down. B's ball first-and-10 on 50. See 9-1-4-Exc.

**A.R. 9.7** Fourth-and-10 on A40. Kicking team player A1 illegally touches a punt on the B25. B1 then recovers and runs to the B35.

a) During a run, kicking team player A1 holds on the B30.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the end of the run (14-1-5-b). B's ball first-and-10 on B40.

b) During a run, receiving team player B1 holds on the B30.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the spot of the foul (14-1-5-d). B's ball first-and-10 on B20.

**A.R. 9.8** Fourth-and-10 on A40. A punt is blocked and does not cross the line.

a) Receiver B1 bats or muffs the ball across the line (3-18-3) where kicking team player A1 is the first player to touch the ball and recovers on the A45.

**Ruling:** Illegal touching of kick by A1. B's ball at the spot of illegal touching on A45 (officials' time out).

b) Receiver B1 deliberately kicks the ball across the line where A1 is the first player to touch the ball on the A45 and recovers it.

**Ruling:** Loss of 10 from the previous spot. Illegal touching is not an offset foul (14-3-1-Exc. 4). A's ball first-and-10 on the 50. See 9-1-4.

**A.R. 9.9** A punt is illegally touched by a kicking team player on the B4. He then carries it across the goal line.

**Ruling:** Touchback.

**A.R. 9.10** A punt is illegally touched by A1 on the receiver's 4-yard line. B1 tries to pick up the ball but muffs and A2 grabs it on the 3-yard line and carries it across the line.

**Ruling:** Illegal touching. No touchback as second touching by A2 was not illegal touching. B's ball on its 4-yard line.

**A.R. 9.11** A punt is illegally touched on the B4 by kicking team player A1. He carries it into the end zone. During his run to the end zone, B1 clips in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Spot of enforcement is B20. B's ball first-and-10 on B10.

Kicker Out of Bounds

**Article 5** No player of the kicker's team, who has been out of bounds, may touch or recover a scrimmage kick beyond the line until it has been touched by a kicking team player who has not been out of bounds or until after it has been touched by the receiving team.

**Penalty: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.**

Kickers Recover Kick Made From Behind Line

**Article 6** A ball is dead if the kickers recover a kick made from behind the line (other than one recovered on or behind the line unless a Try-kick) (9-1-4-Exc.).

Kick Recovery Beyond Line

*Note: When the kickers recover a legal kick from scrimmage after it has first been touched by the receiving team beyond the line, it is first-and-10 for A or if it is recovered by the kickers in the receiver's end zone, it is a touchdown for the kickers. See 7-1-1-c-d and 9-1-4-Exc.*

**A.R. 9.12** Fourth-and-five on A10. A punt crosses the line, touches B1 on the A12, and rebounds behind the line where A1 picks it up and is downed on the A14.

**Ruling:** The ball had first touched Team B beyond the line and wherever A recovers it would be a first down where the ball is finally dead. If the recovery by A is behind the line, A may advance. If the recovery is beyond the line, the ball is dead at the spot of recovery. First down for A in either situation. A's ball first-and-10 on A14.

Kick Touched at or Behind Line by Offense

**Article 7** If a kick from behind the line is touched in the immediate vicinity of the neutral zone or behind A's line by B, such touching does not make A eligible to recover the kick beyond the line.

**A.R. 9.13** Fourth-and-five on A10. A punt is partially blocked behind the line of scrimmage by B1. The ball bounces around behind the line and then rolls beyond the line of scrimmage where A2 recovers on the A16.

**Ruling:** Though B touched the ball, it was behind the line and legal. A2 illegally touched the ball beyond the line at the A16. Ball awarded to B at that spot. B's ball first-and-10 on A16.

Kick Rebounds Behind Line and Is Touched by

**Article 8** Any touching behind the line by a kicking team player is legal, even if the kick crosses the line and returns behind the line



Kickers	before touching a receiver beyond the line.
Kick Simultaneously Recovered	<p><b>Article 9</b> When a legal kick is simultaneously recovered anywhere by two eligible opposing players, or if it is lying on the field of play with no player attempting to recover, it is awarded to the receivers. See 7-4-2.</p> <p><b>A.R. 9.14</b> Fourth-and-10 on A40. A punt is first muffed by B1 on the B20 and then simultaneously recovered by B2 and A1 on the B15.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> Simultaneous recovery of a kick by two eligible opponents belongs to the receivers. B's ball first-and-10 on B15.</p> <p><b>Article 10</b> Ordinarily there is no distinction between a player touching a ball or being touched by it.</p>
Blocked Into Kick	<p><b>Exception:</b> If he is pushed or blocked into a kick by an opponent, he is <i>NOT</i> considered to have touched the ball (3-14-3-Note).</p> <p><i>Note: In order for a player to be considered as not touching the ball, he must be blocked from a passive position into the ball. If he is engaged and is blocking his opponent and he contacts the ball, he is deemed to have touched it.</i></p> <p><b>A.R. 9.15</b> Fourth-and-five on A30. A scrimmage kick comes to rest on B's 45, where A1 blocks or pushes B1 into the ball and A2 recovers on the B40.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> A2 illegally touched as B1 is not considered to have touched it. B's ball first-and-10 on B40.</p>
Kickers' Use of Hands During Kick	<p><b>Article 11</b> During a kick a kicking team player, after he has crossed his scrimmage line, may use his hands to ward off, push, pull aside a receiver who is legally or illegally attempting to obstruct him. See 12-1-2-Exc. 3, and Note.</p> <p><i>Note: See 12-2-12 for prohibited low blocks during kicks.</i></p>
Kick Recovered Behind Line by Kicking Team	<p><b>Article 12</b> When a scrimmage kick from behind the line is recovered by the kicking team behind the line, the kicking team may advance (see 3-27-2, S.N. 2).</p> <p><b>Exception:</b> If the kicking team recovers a kick behind the line during a Try-kick the ball is dead immediately (11-3-1).</p> <p><b>A.R. 9.16</b> Fourth-and-10 on A30. A punt crosses the line and before being touched by the receiving team, the ball rebounds behind the line. A1 recovers and advances to the A35.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> Legal recovery but necessary yardage for the first down for Team A not made. B's ball first-and-10 on A35.</p>

Kick Crosses  
Receivers' Goal  
Line

**A.R. 9.17** Fourth-and-10 on A30. A punt crosses the line and is first touched by receiver B1 beyond the line at the A35. Kicking team member A1 recovers beyond the line and advances.

**Ruling:** The ball is dead where A1 recovered. First-and-10 for A irrespective of the necessary line (9-6-1-Note). A's ball first-and-10 on A35.

**Article 13** When a punt or failed field-goal attempt from inside the receiver's 20-yard line, crosses the receiver's goal line from the impetus of the kick, it is a touchback *unless*:

- (a) On a punt there is a spot of illegal touching by the kickers outside the receivers' 20-yard line; receiver's ball at spot of illegal touch.
- (b) The receivers after gaining possession, advance with the ball into the field of play; receiver's ball at dead ball spot.
- (c) Kickers recover in end zone after receivers first touch ball in field of play; touchdown for kickers.
- (d) Kickers recover in end zone after receivers first touch ball in end zone; touchdown for kickers.
- (e) On a punt, the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play after being touched by a receiver in the end zone or field of play; receiving team's ball at inbounds spot.
- (f) On a missed field-goal attempt, the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play after being touched by a receiver in the end zone; touchback.

*Note: Receiving team players may advance any kick (scrimmage or unsuccessful field goal attempt) whether the ball crosses the receiver's goal line, Rule 9 (Kicks From Scrimmage) applies until the receiving team has gained possession. See 11-5-2.*

**A.R. 9.18** Kicking team member A1 illegally touches a kick on the B10. Receiver B1 muffs on his 5-yard line and A2 recovers in B's end zone.

**Ruling:** B's ball at spot of illegal touch (B10).

**A.R. 9.19** On a scrimmage kick receiver B1 touches or muffs the ball on his 2-yard line.

- a) B1 recovers and is downed in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchback.

- b) Kicking player A1 recovers in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchdown A.

**A.R. 9.20** On a scrimmage kick receiver B1 touches or muffs the ball in the end zone. The ball rebounds to B's 3-yard line.

a) B1 recovers there.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B3.

b) Kicking team player A1 recovers on the B3.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-goal on B3.

**A.R. 9.21** On a scrimmage kick receiver B1 gains possession in the end zone after touching the ball in the field of play.

a) B1 is tackled and downed in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchback.

b) B1 runs to the B4.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B4.

c) B1 fumbles and A1 recovers in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchdown.

**A.R. 9.22** On a scrimmage kick receiver B1 gains possession and is downed in the end zone.

a) During the run B2 clips in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety (14-1-11).

b) During the run B2 clips in the field of play.

**Ruling:** Receiver's ball first-and-10 on B10 (enforcement is from the succeeding spot after a touchback).

**A.R. 9.23** Fourth-and-10 on B45. A1 first touches a punt on B's 5-yard line. In attempting to recover he forces the ball into B's end zone (new impetus) where B1 recovers and goes to the B10.

**Ruling:** B has the option of the spot of first touching (B5) but takes his advance on the B10. B's ball first-and-10 on B10.

Kick Touching  
Receivers' Goal  
Posts

**Article 14** If a punt or missed field goal attempt from inside the receiver's 20-yard line *touches the receivers' goal posts or crossbar* either before or after touching a player of either team, it is a touchback. See 3-20-2 and 11-5-1.

**A.R. 9.24** A kickoff to start the game hits the goal post before possession by the receivers.

**Ruling:** Touchback. Any legal kick (scrimmage or free kick) which touches the receivers' goal posts or crossbar other than one which scores a field goal is a touchback. See 11-6-1-d and 11-5-1.

Kick Touching Kickers' Goal Posts

**Article 15** If a scrimmage kick *touches the kickers' goal post or crossbar* (irrespective of where it was made from, or how it occurred), it is a safety. Goal post is out of bounds. See 11-4-1-b.

**A.R. 9.25** Fourth-and-10 on A10. A punt is blocked and the ball rebounds, hits the goal post, and rolls into the end zone where receiver B1 falls on it.

**Ruling:** Safety. Ball out of bounds.

Kick Out of Bounds

**Article 16** For a scrimmage kick out of bounds between goal lines, see 7-5-1. If the kick becomes dead behind a goal line, Rule 11-6 governs.

Scrimmage Kick Spots of Enforcement

**Article 17** If there is a foul from the time of the snap until a legal scrimmage kick ends, enforcement is from the previous spot. This includes a foul during a run prior to the legal kick (14-1-13-S.N. 1), and running into or roughing the kicker (12-2-6). If the offensive team commits a foul in its own end zone, it is a safety.

Spot Foul

**Exception 1:** Illegal touching of kick, fair catch interference, interference with opportunity, invalid fair catch signal, or personal foul (blocking) after fair catch signal are all enforced from the spot of the foul.

Post-Possession Foul

**Exception 2:** If the receiving team commits a foul after the ball is kicked (ball crosses the scrimmage line) during a scrimmage down and the receivers possess and thereafter keep the kicked ball, throughout the remainder of the down, the penalty for their infraction will be ruled as a foul after possession (post-possession) and must be assessed from:

- 1) The spot where possession was gained;
- 2) The spot where ball becomes dead; or
- 3) The spot of the foul.

*Note: If there is a spot of illegal touch, it is not used.*

Illegal Touch, Receiving Team Foul During Kick, Loss of Possession

**Exception 3:** In cases of illegal touch by kicker, and a foul by the receiving team during

the kick, if the receiving team then loses possession, the ball reverts to the receivers and the penalty must be assessed from:

- 1) The spot where possession was gained;
- 2) The spot of the foul.

*Note: The spot of illegal touch is not used.*

**A.R. 9.26** Fourth-and-10 on A30. A1 fumbles behind the line, recovers, runs, and then punts from the A35. The ball goes out of bounds at B20.

**Ruling:** Enforcement is from A35. Ten-yard penalty. A's ball fourth-and-15 A25.

**A.R. 9.27** Kicking team member A1 illegally touches a punt on the B10. Receiver B1 recovers, advances, fumbles, and A2 recovers.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B10—the spot of illegal touch.

**A.R. 9.28** Fourth-and-10 on 50. Receiver B1 illegally pulls the center to allow B2 the opportunity to block the kick. A2 successfully punts.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on B45. B penalized for foul prior to the kick.

**A.R. 9.29** Fourth-and-10 on 50. Punter A1 kicks and after the ball has crossed the scrimmage line, receiver B1 clips at the B40. B2 gains possession at the B16, runs to the B20, and is downed.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B8. Enforce from the spot of the possession. It is a post-possession foul and is considered an offensive foul.

**A.R. 9.30** Fourth-and-10 on 50. Punter A1 kicks, and after the ball crosses the scrimmage line, receiver B1 clips at the B40. The ball then goes out of bounds at the B8.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on the B4. It is a post-possession foul.

**A.R. 9.31** Fourth-and-10 on 50. Punter A1 kicks and after the ball has crossed the scrimmage line, receiver B1 clips at the B22. A2 touches the ball at the B18. A3 recovers on the B8.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on the B4.

**A.R. 9.32** Fourth-and-10 on 50. Punter A1 kicks, and after the kick has crossed the scrimmage line, receiver B1 clips on the B30. Kicking team member A2 touches the ball at the B18. Receiving

team member B2 muffs the kick on the B15. Kicking team member A3 recovers on the B10.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on B35. Team B did not gain possession and recovery by A3 was legal (touching by A2 was illegal). Not a post-possession foul.

Kicking Team  
Player Voluntarily  
Out of Bounds  
During a Punt

**Article 18** During a punt (prior to a change of possession), if a kicking team player goes out of bounds voluntarily (without being contacted) it is a foul.

**Penalty: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.**

# RULE 10 FAIR CATCH

## Section 1 Fair Catch

Valid Fair Catch

**Article 1** A fair catch signal is valid beyond the line while kick is in flight when one arm is fully extended above the head and waved from side to side.

Shielding Eyes

*Note: A receiver may legally raise his hand(s) to his helmet (but not above the helmet) in order to shield his eyes from the sun.*

**Penalty: For invalid fair catch signal: Snap by receivers five yards behind the spot of the signal.**

**A.R. 10.1** Receiver B1 gives a fair catch signal on the B30 and catches the ball on the B28.

a) B1's signal was arm fully extended straight up.

**Ruling:** Invalid signal. B's ball first-and-10 on B25 (five yards from signal).

b) B1's signal was arm straight fully extended and waved from side to side.

**Ruling:** Valid signal. B's ball first-and-10 on B28.

Dead Ball on Fair Catch

**Article 2** If a receiver signals (valid or invalid) for a fair catch during any kick except one which does not cross the line, the ball is dead when caught by any receiver (Article 2, Exception). If the catcher did not signal, the ball is put in play by the receivers at the spot of the catch. See 10-1-6.

**Exceptions:** Any receiver may recover and advance after a fair catch signal if the kick either:

- 1) touches the ground; or
- 2) touches one of the kickers in flight.

Delay Penalty for Undue Advance

*Note: Undue advance by any receiver who catches (except as provided in above Exception) is delay of the game but does not preclude the fair catch. No specific distance is specified for undue advance as the ball is dead at the spot of the catch (3-9-1) when caught (time out). If the catcher comes to a reasonable stop, there is no penalty for delay. Any penalty is enforced from the spot of the catch.*

**A.R. 10.2** Receiver B1 signals for a fair catch and then muffs. He recovers on the ground and then runs for a score.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. Legal advance as the ball touched the ground. If the kicking team recovered after the muff, the ball is dead at the spot of recovery.

**A.R. 10.3** Receivers B1 and B2 signal for a fair catch. B1 muffs.

B2 catches and comes to a legal stop.

**Ruling:** Fair catch. Either man may catch but not advance.

**A.R. 10.4** Receiver B1 signals for a fair catch, muffs and B2 who did not signal catches ball.

**Ruling:** Not a fair catch. The ball is dead at the spot where it was caught. No option for fair catch kick and the ball is put in play by snap.

**A.R. 10.5** Receiver B1 makes a valid fair catch signal on the B15. He catches on his 20, advances unduly and fumbles. Kicking team player A1 recovers.

**Ruling:** Five-yard penalty for delay from the spot where the ball was caught. The ball is dead when caught. B's ball first-and-10 on B15.

**A.R. 10.6** Receiver B1 signals for a fair catch. The kick in flight strikes A1 after which it is caught by B2 who advances.

**Ruling:** Legal advance if any fair catch interference penalty is declined (choice).

Illegal Block After  
Fair Catch Signal

**Article 3** If a player signals (valid or invalid) for a fair catch, until the ball touches another player he may not:

- (a) block; or
- (b) initiate contact with one of the kickers.

**Penalty: For illegal block after a fair catch signal. Snap by receivers 15 yards from the spot of the foul. (Personal Foul.)**

**A.R. 10.7** Receiver B1 signals a fair catch on the B28. He disregards the ball and blocks A2 on the B30 as the ball goes over his head and before touching any player and rolls out of bounds at B18.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B15.

**A.R. 10.8** Receiver B1 signals a fair catch on the B12. He disregards the ball and blocks kicking team player A2 on the B8:

- a) before or after the ball rolls into the end zone or out of bounds.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B4.

Fair Catch  
Interference

**Article 4** During any kick (except one which fails to cross the scrimmage line), if any receiver could reach the kick in flight, no player of the kickers shall interfere with either:

- (a) the receiver;
- (b) the ball; or
- (c) the receiver's path to the ball.

**Penalty (a): For fair catch interference following a signal: Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul. Fair catch also**



awarded irrespective of a catch. See Article 5-Note, and Article 6. (Personal Foul.)

**Penalty (b): For interference with the opportunity to make a catch (no prior signal made): Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul and offended team is entitled to put the ball in play by a snap from scrimmage. See 4-3-11-f. (Personal foul if there is contact.)**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Receiver's Right to Ball

(1) A receiver running toward a kick in flight has the right of way and opponents must get out of his path to the ball. Otherwise it is interference irrespective of any contact or catch or whether any signal (valid or invalid) is given or not.

Fair Catch Opportunity

(2) After a valid fair catch signal, the opportunity to make a catch does not end when a kick is muffed. The player who signaled fair catch must have a reasonable opportunity to catch the ball before it hits the ground without being interfered with by the members of the kicking team.

Intentional Muff Prior to Fair Catch

(3) An intentional muff forward prior to a catch in order to gain ground is an illegal bat (see 12-1-6).

**A.R. 10.9** Receiver B1 is about to catch a punt. Just before the ball reaches his hands, he is tackled by A1 on the B30, but he catches the ball while falling.

**Ruling:** Interference with the opportunity to make a catch and fair catch awarded and 15 yards from the spot of the foul even though B1 did not signal. Same ruling would apply if B1 fumbles or muffs; however, the ball continues in play. B's ball first-and-10 on B45. B did not signal, so team B puts the ball in play by snap from scrimmage. See S.N.

**A.R. 10.10** Receiver B1 does not signal for a fair catch and runs toward the punted ball in an attempt to catch it. A1 is in his way on the B30 and B1 can't get to the ball. The ball rolls to the B20 where it is downed by B2.

**Ruling:** A 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul for interference with the opportunity to make a catch. No fair catch signal given. B's ball first-and-10 on B45. Ball in play by snap from scrimmage. See S.N.

**A.R. 10.11** Offensive end A1 goes downfield under a punt. He is struck by the kick in flight on the B30 while standing in front of B2 who is ready to catch. B2 had signalled a fair catch.

**Ruling:** Fair catch interference and B awarded fair catch whether the catch is made or not. Team B can advance the ball if it gets it and has option of yardage gained or penalty for fair catch interference. B's ball first-and-10 on B45. B2 signalled fair catch and gets option of fair catch kick or putting ball in play by snap

from scrimmage. See S.N.

**A.R. 10.12** Receiver B1 signals for a fair catch and then muffs the ball on the B30. A1 catches at the B30 and advances. B1 could have caught the muffed ball.

**Ruling:** Fair catch interference as opportunity to make the catch does not end when the kick is muffed. The ball is dead when A1 catches the ball. B's ball first-and-10 on B45. (See 10-1-4-S.N. 2).

Receiver's Rights  
on Fair Catch

**Article 5** After a receiver has made a fair catch following a valid signal, an opponent:

- (a) may not tackle him;
- (b) may not block him; and
- (c) must avoid contact with him.

**Penalty: For illegal contact with the maker of a fair catch: Loss of 15 yards from the mark of the catch (snap or free kick). See 6-1-3 Note.**

Fair Catch in End  
Zone

*Note: A receiver may make or be awarded a fair catch after fair-catch interference in his end zone. However, it is considered a touchback, and no fair-catch kick is awarded. After a receiver has made a fair catch in the end zone and there is then illegal contact with the maker of the fair catch, the 15-yard penalty is enforced from the receiver's 20-yard line, and fair catch is awarded.*

**A.R. 10.13** Fourth-and-10 on A20. Receiver B1 makes an invalid fair catch signal and catches on B40. He comes to a legal stop on B42 and is tackled by A1.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B35 (10-1-1).

Choices After  
Fair Catch

**Article 6** When a fair catch is declared for a team, the captain must choose (and his first choice is not revocable) either:

- (a) A fair-catch kick (drop kick or place kick without a tee) must be made on or behind the mark of the catch (3-9-1 and 11-5-3), or
- (b) A snap to put the ball in play.

*Note: If the fair catch is made or awarded outside the inbounds lines, the ball is next put in play at the nearest inbounds line.*

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

- (1) If, with time remaining, receiver signals and makes a fair catch, receiving team captain has option of attempting a fair-catch kick or putting ball in play by a snap from scrimmage.
- (2) If, with time remaining, receiver does not signal for a fair catch, and he is interfered with, receiving team will be awarded a 15-yard penalty but must put the ball in play by a snap from scrimmage.
- (3) If, with time remaining, receiver signals for a fair catch, and is interfered with, receiving team will be awarded a 15-yard penalty

and has option of a fair-catch kick or putting ball in play by a snap from scrimmage.

(4) If time expired on the play and receiver signals and makes a fair catch, receiving team may elect to extend with a fair-catch kick. There is no option to snap from scrimmage.

(5) If time expired on the play and receiver does not signal for a fair catch, and he is interfered with, receiving team will be awarded a 15-yard penalty and an option to extend, but must put the ball in play by a snap from scrimmage.

(6) If time expired on the play and receiver signals for a fair catch, and is interfered with, receiving team will be awarded a 15-yard penalty and has the option to extend with a fair-catch kick or may put the ball in play by a snap from scrimmage for the period to be extended.

# RULE 11 SCORING

## Section 1 Value of Scores

Scores	<b>Article 1</b> The team that scores the greater number of points during the entire game is the winner. Points are scored as follows: (a) Touchdown 6 points (b) Field Goal 3 points (c) Safety 2 points (d) Successful Try after touchdown 1 or 2 points
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*Note: If a team forfeits a game, the opponent will be declared the winner by a score of 2-0, but the points will not be added to the winning team's record for purposes of offensive production on tie-breakers*

Sudden Death	<b>Article 2</b> To insure a winner in all NFL games the sudden death method of deciding a tie game is Rule 16.
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## Section 2 Touchdown

Touchdown Plays	<b>Article 1</b> It is a touchdown: (a) when a runner (3-38) advances from the field of play and the ball touches the opponents' goal line (plane); or (b) while inbounds any player catches or recovers a loose ball (3-2-3) on or behind the opponents' goal line.
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## SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Dead Ball	(1) The ball is automatically dead at the instant of legal player possession on, above, or behind the opponents' goal line.
Palpably Unfair Act	(2) The referee may award a touchdown when a palpably unfair act deprives the offended team of one.
Foul After Touchdown	(3) For a foul after a touchdown (between downs), see 3-11-2-d and 14-5.

**A.R. 11.1** Third-and-goal on B2. Runner A1 goes to the goal line with the ball over the plane of the goal line. He is tackled and fumbles and the defensive team recovers in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. The ball is automatically dead at the instant of legal player possession on the opponent's goal line.

## Section 3 Try

Try	<b>Article 1</b> After a touchdown, the scoring team is allowed a Try. This Try is an attempt to score one or two additional points, during one scrimmage down with the spot of snap:
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- (a) anywhere between the inbounds lines *and*
- (b) which is also two or more yards from the defensive team's goal line.

*Note 1: All general rules for fourth-down fumbles apply to the Try (See 8-4-2-Exc. 2), and the game clock will not run.*

*Note 2: If the ball has been declared ready for play by the referee, and the offensive team wants to change the location of the ball, they can do so by calling a timeout.*

During this Try:

- Try-One Point (a) if a Try-kick is good, one point is scored. (The conditions of 11-5-1 must be met.) If a kick cannot score, the ball becomes dead as soon as failure is evident
- Try-Two Points (b) if a Try results in what would ordinarily be a touchdown by the offense, two points are awarded. If a touchdown is not scored, the Try is over at the end of the play or if there is a change of possession.
- Try Point Awarded (c) if there is no kick and the Try results in what would ordinarily be a safety by the defense, one point is awarded to the offensive team.

**A.R. 11.2** An attempted Try-kick is blocked. Offensive A1 recovers behind the line and advances across the goal line or recovers in defensive's end zone.

**Ruling:** No score in either case. The ball is dead as soon as its failure as a kick to score a Try is evident.

**A.R. 11.3** During a Try, placekick holder A1 fumbles. B1 kicks, bats, or muffs the loose ball (new impetus) on his 2 and it goes out of bounds behind the goal line.

**Ruling:** Ordinarily a safety (11-4-1). Award one point.

- Start of Try **Article 2** The Try begins when the referee sounds his whistle for play to start.

*Note: See 3-11-1-d-Exc. for a foul after a touchdown and before the whistle.*

**A.R. 11.4** Offensive player A1 clips after runner A2 had scored a touchdown.

**Ruling:** Penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot which is the spot of the next kickoff. Spot of ball for Try is from 2 or more yards from B's goal line. Penalty is not enforced on Try.

**Article 3** During a Try:

- Unsuccessful Try (a) if any play or a foul by the offense would ordinarily result in a touchback or loss of down, the Try is unsuccessful and there shall be no replay.
- Defensive Foul (b) if any play or a foul by the defense would ordinarily result in a

Results in Score	safety, one point is awarded the offensive team.
Replay Try	(c) if a foul by the defense does not permit the Try to be attempted, the down is replayed and the offended team has the option to have the distance penalty assessed on the next Try or on the ensuing kickoff.
Defensive Foul on Unsuccessful Extra Point	(d) if the defensive team commits a foul and the Try is attempted and is unsuccessful, the offensive team may either accept the penalty yardage to be assessed or decline the distance penalty before the down is replayed.  (e) all fouls committed by the defense on a successful Try will result in the distance penalty being assessed on the ensuing kickoff or re-try B1. See A.R. 14.27.
Whistle, Play Dead	(f) if there is a false start, encroachment, or a neutral zone infraction which normally causes play to be whistled dead during ordinary scrimmage plays, they are to be handled the same way during Try situations. Blow whistle immediately. (See 7-2-2 and 7-3-4).  <i>Note: See 12-3-1-a, k, l, m, p, that apply during a Try.</i> <b>A.R. 11.5</b> During a Try, runner A1 is downed on B's 2 in a side zone. During the run, B1 commits a personal foul. <b>Ruling:</b> Replay from the previous spot or from the spot after enforcement. <b>A.R. 11.6</b> During a Try which is unsuccessful, defensive B1 is offside. <b>Ruling:</b> Replay at previous spot or one yard line. <b>A.R. 11.7</b> During a Try which is successful, defensive B1 is offside. <b>Ruling:</b> Try good and loss of yardage on kickoff against B, or retry from B1-yard line.
Double Foul Replayed	<b>Article 4</b> If fouls are signalled against both teams during a Try, it must be replayed (14-3-1).
No Score for Defense	<b>Article 5</b> During a Try the defensive team can never score. When it gains possession, the ball is dead immediately.
Kickoff After Try	<b>Article 6</b> After a Try the team on defense during the Try shall receive (6-1-1-b).
	<b>Section 4 Safety</b>
Safety	<b>Article 1</b> When an impetus by a team sends the ball in touch behind its own goal, it is a safety if the ball is either:  (a) dead in the end zone in its possession; or

Momentum

(b) out of bounds behind the goal line.

**Exception:** If a defensive player, in the field of play, intercepts a pass or catches or recovers a fumble, backward pass, scrimmage kick, free kick or fair catch kick, and his original momentum carries him into his end zone where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession, the ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where the ball was intercepted, caught, or recovered.

(a) If a player of the team which intercepts, catches, or recovers the ball commits a foul in the end zone, it may be a safety.

(b) If a player who intercepts, catches, or recovers the ball throws a completed illegal forward pass from the end zone, the ball remains alive. If his opponent intercepts the illegal pass thrown from the end zone, the ball remains alive. If he scores, it is a touchdown.

(c) If a player of the team which intercepts, catches, or recovers the ball commits a foul in the field of play and the ball becomes dead in the end zone, the basic spot is the spot of the change of possession with momentum. See A.R. 11.15.

(d) If spot where possession changed is inside the B1-yard line, ball is to be spotted at B1.

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Impetus

(1) The impetus is always attributed to the offense...unless the defense creates a new momentum, by a muff of a ball which is at rest or nearly at rest, illegal batting of a ball, or illegally kicking a ball that sends it in touch. (3-14-3).

(2) See 8-1-1-S.N. 2 and Penalties under 8-1-2 to 5 for Exceptions to (b) of 11-4-1, when there is an incompleteness or pass violation by the offense behind its goal line during a forward pass from behind the line.

**A.R. 11.8** Second-and-10 on A6. Quarterback A1 throws a backward pass which is batted by defensive B1. The ball goes out of bounds behind the goal line.

**Ruling:** Safety. Legal bat and no change of impetus.

**A.R. 11.9** Defensive B1 muffs a punt on his 5-yard line. In attempting to recover he forces the ball (new impetus) into his end zone. See 3-14-3.

a) where he recovers and is downed there.

**Ruling:** safety.

b) where he recovers and advances.

**Ruling:** legal advance.

c) where kicking team player recovers.

**Ruling:** Touchdown.

**A.R. 11.10** Defensive B1 catches a punt on the B4. He fumbles the ball on the B4 and kicking team player A1 bats the loose ball. The ball rolls over the end line.

**Ruling:** Touchback. See 11-6-1 and 12-1-6.

**A.R. 11.11** Defensive B1 fumbles after catching a punt on the B5 and it crosses his goal line. Kicking team player A1 recovers while he is touching the sideline.

**Ruling:** Safety. If it had been a muff (no new impetus or change of possession) and the same situation, it would be a touchback (11-6-1).

**A.R. 11.12** Second-and-10 on B20. Defensive B1 intercepts a legal forward pass on the B2. His momentum carries him into the end zone where he is downed.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B2.

**A.R. 11.13** Second-and-10 on B20. Defensive B1 intercepts a legal forward pass on the B4 and his intercepting momentum carries him into the end zone. He then runs it out to the B35.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B35.

**A.R. 11.14** Second-and-10 on B20. Defensive B1 intercepts a pass on the B6 and his momentum carries him into the end zone where he is tackled, fumbles and passing team player A1 recovers there.

**Ruling:** Touchdown A; kickoff on A30.

**A.R. 11.15** Second-and-10 on B20. Defensive B1 intercepts a legal forward pass on the B4 and his momentum carries him into the end zone where he is downed.

a) B2 clipped in the end zone.

**Ruling:** safety.

b) B2 clipped on the B2.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B1.

Foul Behind  
Offensive Goal

**Article 2** It is a safety when the offense commits a foul (anywhere) and the spot of enforcement is behind its own goal line.

**A.R. 11.16** Second-and-15 on A4. Runner A1 fumbles a handoff on his 5-yard line. The ball rolls into the end zone where A1 bats or kicks the ball across the end line to prevent a recovery by the defense.

**Ruling:** Safety, whether the penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul or is declined. (11-2-1-S.N. 2).



**A.R. 11.17** Receiver B1 recovers a free kick in his end zone. While advancing, he fumbles while still in the end zone. The fumble is on the ground on the B2 where B3 deliberately kicks it.

**Ruling:** Safety (8-4-4). The spot of enforcement is from the spot of the fumble.

**A.R. 11.18** B1 catches a kickoff and makes a forward pass from behind his goal line.

**Ruling:** Safety. Team A may intercept and advance.

**A.R. 11.19** Second-and-15 on A2. Runner A1 is downed two yards behind his goal line.

a) A2 holds anywhere in the field.

**Ruling:** Safety (14-1-11).

b) B1 holds at A1.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on A6 (12-1-4-Pen. and 14-1-12-Exc. 7).

**A.R. 11.20** Second-and-16 on A4. Quarterback A1 drops back to pass and throws a legal forward pass complete to end A2 who runs for a touchdown. Prior to the completion offensive tackle A3 holds in the end zone.

**Ruling:** No touchdown. Safety.

Ball inPlay After  
Safety

**Article 3** After a safety, the team scored upon must next put the ball in play by a free kick (punt, dropkick or placekick). No tee can be used. See 6-1-2 and 3.

**Exception:** Extension of period (4-3-11-Note h).

### Section 5 Field Goal

Legal Field Goal

**Article 1** A field goal is scored when all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The kick must be a placekick or dropkick made by the offense from behind the line of scrimmage or from the spot of a fair catch (fair catch kick).

(b) The ball must not touch the ground or any player of the offensive team before it passes through the goal.

Entire Ball  
Through Goal

(c) The entire ball must pass through the goal. In case wind or other forces cause it to return through the goal, it must have struck the ground or some object or person before returning.

Missed Field  
Goals

**Article 2** All field goals attempted and missed when the spot of the kick is beyond the 20-yard line will result in the defensive team taking possession of the ball at the spot of the kick. On any field goal attempted and missed when the spot of the kick is on or inside the 20-yard line, the ball will revert to the defensive team at the 20-yard line.

**Exception 1:** If a field goal attempt is missed and the ball is touched or possessed by the receivers beyond the line of scrimmage in the field of play, the ball will not come back to the spot of kick. All general rules for a kick from scrimmage will apply. If a foul occurs during the missed field goal attempt, Rule 9-1-17 governs.

**Exception 2:** If a blocked field goal attempted from anywhere on the field is recovered behind the line of scrimmage by a defensive player and is not advanced, or if the blocked field goal attempt goes out of bounds behind the line of scrimmage, it is the receiving team's ball at that spot.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) If a missed field goal is first touched by the receivers beyond the line in the field of play and the ball then goes out of bounds, it is the receivers' ball at the out of bounds spot.

(2) If a missed field goal does not touch a receiver in the end zone and the ball then bounces back into the field of play, it is the receivers' ball at the spot of the kick if they did not touch the ball in the field of play (touchback if kick is made from inside B20).

(3) If on a missed field goal the ball first touches a receiver in the end zone and returns to the field of play where it is not covered and then declared dead, the ball belongs to B at the spot of the kick (touchback if kick is made from inside B20).

(4) If the receivers first touch a missed field goal anywhere beyond the line of scrimmage and the kickers recover, the ball belongs to the kickers at the spot of the recovery. If in the end zone, it is a touchdown.

**Exception:** If a receiver is the first to touch a missed field goal in the field of play, and the ball then rolls into the end zone where it is declared dead (no new impetus) in possession of B, it is a touchback.

**A.R. 11.21** Fourth-and-10 on B35. On a field goal attempt, the ball is kicked from the B42 and is wide and goes over the end line.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B42. The defensive team takes possession at the spot of the kick.

*Note: See 12-3-1-a, k, l, m that apply during a field-goal attempt.*

**A.R. 11.22** Fourth-and-10 on B35. A field goal attempt is kicked from the B42, and is missed and:

a) the ball rolls dead on the B10.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B42.

b) B1 touches and downs the ball on the B10.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B10.

c) B1 fair-catches the ball on the B10.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B10.

**A.R. 11.23** Fourth-and-10 on B35. On a field goal attempt B1 catches the ball on the B10 and:

a) returns the ball to the B24.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B24. If the receiving team runs a missed field goal, it continues as any other play.

b) returns the ball to the 50.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on 50.

**A.R. 11.24** Fourth-and-10 on B30. A field goal attempt is kicked from the B37 and is partially blocked behind the line and the ball rolls out of bounds on the B5:

a) without touching any receiver beyond the line of scrimmage.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on the B37.

b) after touching a receiver beyond the line of scrimmage.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on the B5 (the spot of out of bounds).

**A.R. 11.25** Fourth-and-10 on B21. A missed field goal is kicked from the B28 and hits in the end zone and bounces back into the field of play to the B3 where:

a) no receiver touches the ball.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on the B28.

b) receiver B1 falls on the ball at the B3.

**Ruling:** B's ball, first-and-10 on the B3.

c) B1 picks up the ball on the B3 and runs to the B10.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on the B10.

d) B1 picks up the ball, runs to the B10, is tackled and fumbles. A1 recovers and is downed on the B8.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-goal on the B8.

**A.R. 11.26** Fourth-and-10 on B35. On a missed field goal attempt B1 touches the ball on the B4 and the ball then rolls into the end zone (or over the end line) where it is declared dead in possession of team B.

**Ruling:** Touchback. B's ball first-and-10 on B20.

**A.R. 11.27** Fourth-and-two on B10. A field goal is good. B1 punched A2 on the scrimmage line.

**Ruling:** Option for team A. Score for field goal or A's ball first-and-goal on B5. See 14-6. Disqualify B1. If a score taken, it is 15-yard

	penalty against B on kickoff (14-1-14).
Fair Catch Kick	<b>Article 3</b> On a field goal attempt (10-1-6) following a fair catch, all general rules apply as for a field goal attempt from scrimmage. The clock starts when the ball is kicked.
Fair Catch Kick Lines	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE 1:</b></p> <p>(a) The fair catch kick line for the kicking team is the yard line through the most forward point from which the ball is kicked.</p> <p>(b) The fair catch kick line for the receiving team is the yard line 10 yards in advance of the kicking team's fair catch kick line.</p>
Start of Game Clock	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE 2:</b></p> <p>The game clock starts when the ball is kicked, independent of the time of game.</p> <p><b>Exception:</b> The ball is no longer a free kick ball. The kicking team can't get the ball unless it had been first touched or possessed by the receivers.</p> <p><b>A.R. 11.28</b> On a fair catch kick from the B45, kicker A1 touches and falls on the ball on the B33 without any receiver touching the ball.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> B's ball first-and-10 on the B45 (the previous spot). The clock is started when the ball is kicked.</p> <p><b>A.R. 11.29</b> On a fair catch kick from the B45, the ball goes out of bounds on the B10:</p> <p>a) without touching any player.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> B's ball first-and-10 on the B45. The clock starts when the ball is kicked.</p> <p>b) after touching any kicking team player.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> B's ball first-and-10 on the B45. The clock starts when the ball is kicked.</p>
No Artificial Media	<b>Article 4</b> No artificial media shall be permitted to assist in the execution of a field goal and/or Try-kick attempt after a touchdown.
Kickoff Team	<b>Article 5</b> After a field goal, the team scored upon will receive. See 6-1-2 and 3.
	<p><b>Section 6 Touchback</b></p> <p><i>Note: A touchback, while not a score, is included in this rule because, like scoring plays, it is a case of a ball dead in touch (3-14-2).</i></p>
Touchback Situations	<b>Article 1</b> When an impetus (3-14-3) by a team sends a ball in touch behind its opponents' goal line, it is a touchback:

- (a) if the ball is dead in the opponents' possession in their end zone;
- (b) if the ball is out of bounds behind the goal line (see 7-5-6-c);
- (c) if the impetus was a scrimmage kick unless there is a spot of first touching by the kickers outside the receivers' 20-yard line or if the receivers after gaining possession advance with the ball into the field of play (9-1-13-b); or
- (d) if any legal kick touches the receivers' goal posts or crossbar other than one which scores a field goal.

**New Impetus**

*Note: The impetus is not from a kick if a muff, bat, juggle, or illegal kick of any kicked ball (by a player of either team) creates a new momentum which sends it in touch. See 3-14-1-Note, for a specific ball-in-touch ruling.*

**A.R. 11.30** Quarterback A1 throws a legal pass which is intercepted in the end zone by defensive B1. B1 tries to run it out and is downed in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchback. B's ball first-and-10 on B20.

**A.R. 11.31** A punt is caught in end zone by defensive B1 who tries to run it out. He is tackled, fumbles and kicking team player A1 recovers in end zone.

**Ruling:** Touchdown for A1.

**Article 2** It is a touchback:

**Touchbacks**

- (a) when the kickers interfere with a fair catch behind the receivers' goal line (10-1-5-Note and 10-1-2); or
- (b) when the kickers first touch a punt kicked from anywhere in the field of play, or missed field-goal attempt from inside the receiver's 20-yard line, behind the receiver's goal line (9-1-13 and 11-5-1, 2, 3).
- (c) when a kicking team player inside the receiver's 5-yard line illegally recovers or catches a punt or missed field-goal attempt from inside the receiver's 20-yard line (9-1-13 and 11-5-1, 2, 3), and carries the ball directly across the receiver's goal line (9-1-4-Note); or his body touches the end zone (See 9-1-4-Note).

**A.R. 11.32** Fourth-and-10 on B35. A1 is touching the goal line with his foot when he downs the punted ball on the 1 yard line in the field of play.

**Ruling:** Touchback.

**Defensive Foul Behind Offensive Goal Line**

**Article 3** When the spot of enforcement for a foul by the defense is behind the offensive goal line, the distance penalty is enforced from the goal line (14-1-11). See 8-4-4 for Exception.

**A.R. 11.33** Receiver B1, after catching a punt on the B6, fumbles a punt and the ball rolls into his end zone where he recovers. B1

runs but is downed in the end zone. During B1's run A1 commits a personal foul.

**Ruling:** B1's ball first-and-10 on B15.

**A.R. 11.34** Second-and-15 on A4. A backward pass or fumble by offensive A1 on the A2 strikes ground. Defensive B1 deliberately bats or deliberately kicks the ball into the end zone.

a) where A2 recovers.

**Ruling:** Touchback (or loss of 10 from previous spot). A's ball first-and-10 on A20.

b) where B2 recovers.

**Ruling:** Loss of 10 from the previous spot. A's ball first-and-10 on A14.

**Article 4** After a touchback, the touchback team next snaps from its 20 (any point between the inbounds lines and the forward point of the ball on that line).

# RULE 12 PLAYER CONDUCT

Note—The spot of enforcement (when not stated), or the actual distance penalty, or both, are subordinate to the specific rules governing a foul during a fumble, pass, or kick, and these in turn are subordinate to the general provisions of Rule 14.

## Section 1 Use of Hands, Arms, and Body

**Article 1** No offensive player may:

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Assisting Runner          | (a) assist the runner except by individually blocking opponents for him.  |
| Interlocked Interference  | (b) use interlocking interference. Interlocked interference means the grasping of one another by encircling the body to any degree with the hands or arms; or |
| Pushing or Lifting Runner | (c) push the runner or lift him to his feet.  |

**Penalty:** For assisting runner or interlocked interference: Loss of 10 yards.

**A.R. 12.1** Second-and-goal on B2. Runner A1 gets to the line of scrimmage and is stopped but A2 who is behind him pushes him from behind and shoves him over the goal line.

**Ruling:** No score. Illegally assisting runner. A's ball second-and-goal on B12.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Legal Use of Hands | <b>Article 2</b> A runner may ward off opponents with his hands and arms, but no other offensive player may use them to obstruct an opponent, by grasping with hands or encircling with arm in any degree any part of body, during a block. |
|--------------------|---|

### Exceptions:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Legal Block                         | 1) During a legal block (3-3 and 12-1-5).   |
| Use of Hands During Loose Ball      | 2) During a loose ball, an offensive player may use his hands/arms legally to block or otherwise push or pull an opponent out of the way in a <b>personal legal</b> attempt to recover. See specific fumble, pass or kick rules and especially 6-2-5-S-N. 1.<br>3) During a kick, a kicking team player may use his hands/arms to ward off or to push or pull aside a receiver who is legally or illegally attempting to obstruct him beyond the line.<br>4) A runner may lay his hand on a teammate or push him into an opponent but he may not grasp or hold on to him. |
| Use of Hands by Kicking Team Player | <i>Note: During a scrimmage kick, a kicking team player may use his hands to push or pull aside a receiver who is attempting to obstruct him.</i>   |

**Article 3** No player on offense may push or throw his body against a teammate either:

- (a) in such a way as to cause him to assist runner;
- (b) to aid him in an attempt to obstruct an opponent or to recover a loose ball;
- (c) to trip an opponent; or
- (d) in charging, falling, or using hands on the body into the back from behind above the waist of an opponent.

**Penalty: For holding, illegal use of hands, arms, on body on offense: Loss of 10 yards.**

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) *Tripping by either team: Loss of 10 yards.*

(2) *The guideline for officials to use for illegal use of hands in the back above the waist is: if both hands are on the back, or if the shoving hand is in the back and a guide hand is on the arm, it is a foul. If both hands are on the arm, or if the shoving hand is on the arm and the guide hand in the back, it is not a foul.*

Defensive  
Holding

**Article 4** A defensive player may not tackle or hold any opponent other than a runner. Otherwise, he may use his hands, arms, or body only to defend or protect himself against an obstructing opponent in an attempt to reach a runner. On a punt, field-goal attempt, or Try-kick attempt, a defensive player (B1) may not grab and pull an offensive player out of the way which allows another defensive player(s) (B2) to shoot the gap (pull and shoot) in an attempt to block the kick, unless the defensive player (B1) is advancing towards the kicker.

Legal Contact  
Within Five Yards  
of Line

**Exception 1:** An eligible receiver is considered to be an obstructing opponent only to a point five yards beyond the line of scrimmage unless the player who receives the snap demonstrates no further intention to pass the ball (including handing off the ball, pitching the ball or moving out of the pocket). Within this five-yard zone, a defensive player may chuck an eligible receiver in front of him. The defender is allowed to maintain continuous and unbroken contact within the five-yard zone, so long as the receiver has not moved beyond a point that is even with the defender.

Illegal Contact  
Within Five Yards  
of Line

Within the five-yard zone, a defender may not make original contact in the back of a receiver, nor may he use his hands or arms to hang on to or encircle a receiver. The defender cannot extend an arm(s) to cut off or hook a receiver causing contact that impedes and restricts the receiver as the play develops, nor may he maintain contact after the receiver has moved beyond a point that is even with the defender.

Illegal Contact  
Beyond Five-

Beyond the five-yard zone, if the player who receives the snap remains in the pocket with the ball, a defender may use his hands or arms only to defend or protect himself against impending



Yard Zone contact caused by a receiver. If the receiver attempts to evade the defender, the defender cannot chuck him, or extend an arm(s) to cut off or hook him, causing contact that impedes and restricts the receiver as the play develops.

Incidental Contact Beyond Five-Yard Zone Beyond the five-yard zone, incidental contact may exist between receiver and defender as long as it does not materially affect or significantly impede the receiver, creating a distinct advantage.

**Exception 2:** Eligible receivers lined up within two yards of the tackle, whether on or behind the line, may be blocked below the waist *at* or *behind* the line of scrimmage. No eligible receiver can be blocked below the waist after he goes beyond the line. (Illegal Cut.)

*Note 1: Once the quarterback or receiver of the snap hands off, is tackled, pitches the ball to a back, or if the quarterback leaves the pocket area (see 3-24), the restrictions on the defensive team relative to offensive receivers (illegal contact, illegal cut) will end, provided the ball is not in the air.*

*Note 2: Whenever a team presents an apparent punting formation, defensive action that would normally constitute illegal contact (chuck beyond five yards) will no longer be considered a foul.*

**Penalty: For illegal contact, illegal cut, or holding by the defense: Loss of five yards and automatic first down.**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) An eligible pass receiver who takes a position more than two yards outside of his own tackle (flexed receiver) may not be blocked below the waist (illegal cut), unless the quarterback hands off, is tackled, pitches the ball to a back, or if the quarterback leaves the pocket area.

(2) The unnecessary use of the hands by the defense, except as provided in Article 4, is illegal and is commonly used in lieu of a legal block (Article 5) (See 12-2-2).

(3) Any offensive player who pretends to possess the ball and/or one to whom a teammate pretends to give the ball, may be tackled provided he is crossing his scrimmage line between the offensive ends of a normal tight offensive line.

**A.R. 12.2** Second-and-10 on B40. Defensive B1 holds offensive end A1 on the line of scrimmage. Quarterback A2 can't throw the ball and is tackled at the 50.

**Ruling:** Not a forward pass. Enforcement is from the previous spot. A's ball first-and-10 on B35.

**A.R. 12.3** Second-and-10 on A40. Eligible end A1 goes downfield to the B45 and is contacted (chucked) by defender B1 as A1 attempts to evade him. The pass falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on A45. Illegal contact. Eligible receiver A1 is not considered an obstructing player as he was more than five yards beyond line of scrimmage.

**A.R. 12.4** Second-and-10 on A40. Eligible receiver A1 is chucked by B1 at the scrimmage line. B1 then chucks back A2 on the A44 prior to the pass. The pass then falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** Legal use of hands as A1 and A2 were not the same player.

**A.R. 12.5** Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible pass receiver A1 takes a position three yards outside his own tackle and is blocked below the waist at line of scrimmage. The pass falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** Illegal cut as eligible receiver was more than two yards outside of his tackle. Five-yard penalty. A's ball first-and-10 on A35.

**A.R. 12.6** Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible pass receiver A1 lines up one yard outside of his own tackle and is blocked below the waist at the line of scrimmage. Pass falls incomplete.

**Ruling:** Legal block as receiver was lined up within two yards of the tackle. A's ball third-and-10 on A30.

**A.R. 12.7** During a pass *behind* the line (forward or backward) B1 uses his hands on potential receiver A1 who is *behind* A's line. B1 is not using his hands to ward off A1, to push or pull A1 out of the way in order to get to the runner (passer) or to push or pull him out of the way in an actual attempt to catch or recover a loose ball.

**Ruling:** Illegal use of hands by the defense. Loss of five yards and first down for A (14-8-5).

Legal and Illegal  
Block

**Article 5** A player of either team may block at any time provided it is not:

- (a) pass interference (8-2-1);
- (b) fair catch interference (10-1-4);
- (c) kicker (12-2-6) or passer interference (12-2-11);
- (d) unnecessary roughness (12-2-8); or
- (e) illegal cut (12-1-4-S.N.1); or
- (f) illegal low block during free kick, scrimmage kick, or after change of possession (12-2-12).

**A.R. 12.8** Defensive B1 blocks offensive A1 which allows B2 to recover a loose ball.

**Ruling:** Legal block. Cannot use hands unless it is a personal attempt to recover but may block (12-1-5).

Illegal Bat

**Article 6** A player may not bat or punch:

- (a) a loose ball (in field of play) toward opponent's goal line;
- (b) a loose ball in any direction if it is in either end zone;
- (c) a backward pass in flight may not be batted forward by an offensive player.

**Exceptions:** *A forward pass in flight may be tipped, batted, or deflected in any direction by any eligible player at any time.*

**Penalty: For illegal batting or punching the ball: Loss of 10 yards. For enforcement, treat as a foul during a backward pass or fumble (see 8-4-4).**

Illegally Kicking  
Ball

**Article 7** No player may deliberately kick any loose ball or ball in player's possession.

**Penalty: For illegally kicking the ball: Loss of 10 yards. For enforcement, treat as a foul during a backward pass or fumble (see 8-4-4).**

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

- (1) If a loose ball is touched by any part of a player's leg (including knee), it is not considered kicking and is treated merely as touching.
- (2) If the penalty for an illegal bat or kick is declined, procedure is the same as though the ball had been merely muffed. However, if the act (impetus) sends the ball in touch, 3-14-3 applies.
- (3) The penalty for Article 6 and 7, does not preclude a penalty for a palpably unfair act, when a deliberate kick or illegal bat actually prevents an opponent from recovering. See Palpably Unfair Act.
- (4) The ball is not dead when an illegal kick is recovered.
- (5) The illegal kick or bat of a ball in player possession is treated as a foul during fumble (8-4-4).

**A.R. 12.9** Second-and-15 on A2, Quarterback A1 fumbles a snap in the end zone. While the ball is loose on the ground there, A1 deliberately kicks it. The ball is last touched by B1 before going out of bounds on A's 2-yard line.

**Ruling:** Safety. See 7-5-6-d; 11-4-2; and 12-1-7.

### **Section 2 Personal Fouls**

Striking, Kicking,  
or Kneeing  
Opponent

**Article 1** All players are prohibited from:

- (a) striking with the fists;
- (b) kicking or kneeling; or
- (c) striking, swinging, or clubbing to the head, neck, or face with the heel, back, or side of the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, or

clasped hands. See 12-2-3.

*Note: It also is illegal for an opponent to club the passer's arm.*

**Penalty: For fouls in a, b, and c: Loss of 15. If any of the above acts is judged by the official(s) to be flagrant, the offender may be disqualified as long as the entire action is observed by the official(s).**

Head Slap

**Article 2** A defensive player shall not contact an opponent above the shoulders with the palm of his hands except to ward him off on the line. The exception applies only if it is not a repeated act against the same opponent during any one contact.

Legal Contact

**Article 3** A defensive player may use the palm of his hands on an opponent's head, neck or face only to ward off or push him in an actual attempt to get at a loose ball.

No Striking

**Article 4** A player in blocking shall not strike an opponent below the shoulders with his forearm or elbows by turning the trunk of his body at the waist, pivoting or in any other way that is clearly unnecessary.

**Penalty: For illegal use of the palm of the hands or for striking an opponent below the shoulders with the forearm or elbow: Loss of 15 yards.**

*Note: Any impermissible use of elbows, forearms, or knees shall be penalized under the unnecessary roughness rule; flagrantly unnecessary roughness shall be penalized under the same rule and the player disqualified.*

**A.R. 12.10** Second-and-10 on A30. Defensive player B1, on his initial charge, head slaps an offensive tackle on the helmet once with his open hand trying to get at runner A1. A1 is downed on the A35.

**Ruling:** Illegal. A's ball first-and-10 on the 50.

**A.R. 12.11** Second-and-10 on A30. Defensive player B1, on his initial charge, head slaps an offensive tackle on his helmet repeatedly with his open hand in trying to get at a runner. The runner is downed on the A35.

**Ruling:** Illegal. Loss of 15 yards. A's ball first-and-10 on the 50.

Grasping Face Mask

**Article 5** No player shall grasp the face mask of an opponent.

**Penalty: Incidental grasping of the mask—five yards. Not a personal foul (if by the defense there is no automatic first down). Twisting, turning, or pulling the mask—15 yards. A personal foul. The player may be disqualified if the action is judged by the official(s) to be of a flagrant nature.**

**A.R. 12.12** Third-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 runs to the A33, where he is tackled by B1, who incidentally grasps A1's face mask

on the tackle, but it is not a twist, turn, or pull.

**Ruling:** A's ball, third-and-two, on A38. It is not an automatic first down. Five-yard penalty.

Running Into  
Kicker

**Article 6** No defensive player may run into or rough a kicker who kicks from behind his line unless such contact:

- (a) is incidental to and after he has touched the kick in flight;
- (b) is caused by the kicker's own motions;
- (c) occurs during a quick kick;
- (d) occurs during a kick or after a run behind the line;
- (e) occurs after the kicker recovers a loose ball on the ground; or
- (f) is caused because a defender is blocked into the kicker.

Running,  
Roughing Kicker

**Penalty: For running into the kicker: Loss of five yards from the previous spot, no automatic first down. (This is not a personal foul). For roughing the kicker or holder, loss of 15 yards from the previous spot. (This is a personal foul, and also disqualification if flagrant).**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

- (1) Avoiding the kicker is a primary responsibility of defensive players if they do not touch the kick.
- (2) Any contact with the kicker by a single defensive player who has not touched the kick is running into the kicker.
- (3) Any unnecessary roughness committed by defensive players is roughing the kicker. Severity of contact and potential for injury are to be considered.
- (4) When two defensive players are making a bona fide attempt to block a kick from scrimmage (punt, drop kick, and/or placekick) and one of them runs into the kicker after the kick has left the kicker's foot at the same instant the second player blocks the kick, the foul for running into the kicker shall *not* be enforced, unless in the judgment of the referee, the player running into the kicker was clearly the direct cause of the kick being blocked.
- (5) If in the judgment of the referee any of the above action is unnecessary roughness, the penalty for roughing the kicker *shall* be enforced from the previous spot as a foul during a kick.

**A.R. 12.13** Kicker A1 in punt formation muffs a snap. He recovers on the ground and then kicks. A1 is run into, blocked or tackled by B1 who had started his action when A1 first recovered.

**Ruling:** Legal action by B1.

**A.R. 12.14** A1 receives a snap. He starts to run but after a few strides, he kicks from behind his line. As A1 kicks, he is tackled or run into.

**Ruling:** The kicker is to be protected, but the referee should use his judgment when ordinary line play carries an opponent into such a kicker or at any time when it is not obvious that a kick is to be made (quick kick).

**A.R. 12.15** Fourth-and-12 on B30. On a field goal attempt which is not good, receiver B1 runs into the kicker without touching the ball.

**Ruling:** A's ball fourth-and-7 on B25. Running into the kicker. If the field goal had been good, no penalty would be enforced on the succeeding kickoff, since it was not a personal foul.

No Piling On

**Article 7** There shall be no piling on (3-22).

**Penalty: For piling on: Loss of 15 yards.**

*Note: An official should prevent piling on a prostrate or helpless runner before the ball is dead. When opponents in close proximity to such a runner are about to pile on, and further advance is improbable, the official covering should sound his whistle for a dead ball, in order to prevent further play and roughness. See 7-4-1-d.*

**A.R. 12.16** The holder of a Try-kick is run into or piled on and the act is not incidental to blocking the kick.

**Ruling:** Unnecessary roughness. Such a player is obviously out of play unless the kick is blocked, and even then until he arises and participates in play. See 14-1-14 and 14-6-Exc. 6.

Unnecessary  
Roughness

**Article 8** There shall be no unnecessary roughness. This shall include, but will not be limited to:

Striking

(a) striking an opponent anywhere above the knee with the foot or any part of the leg below the knee with a whipping motion;

(b) tackling the runner when he is clearly out of bounds;

(c) A member of the receiving team cannot go out of bounds and contact a kicking team player out of bounds. If this occurs on a kick from scrimmage, post-possession rules would apply if appropriate (9-1-17);

(d) running or diving into, or throwing the body against or on a ball carrier who falls or slips to the ground untouched and makes no attempt to advance, before or after the ball is dead;

(e) running or diving into, or throwing the body against or on a player obviously out of the play, before or after the ball is dead; or throwing the runner to the ground after the ball is dead;

Contacting  
Runner Out of  
Bounds

(f) contacting a runner out of bounds. Defensive players must make an effort to avoid contact. Players on defense are responsible for knowing when a runner has crossed the boundary line, except in doubtful cases where he might step on a boundary line and continue parallel with it;

Impermissible  
Use of Helmet  
and Facemask

(g) using any part of a player's helmet (including the top/crown and forehead/"hairline" parts) or facemask to butt, spear, or ram an opponent violently or unnecessarily; although such violent or unnecessary use of the helmet and facemask is impermissible against any opponent, game officials will give special attention in administering this rule to protecting those players who are in virtually defenseless postures (e.g., a player in the act of or just after throwing a pass, a receiver catching or attempting to catch a pass, a runner already in the grasp of a tackler, a kickoff or punt returner attempting to field a kick in the air, or a player on the ground at the end of a play). All players in virtually defenseless postures are protected by the same prohibitions against use of the helmet and facemask that are described in the roughing-the-passer rules (see Article 11, subsection 3 below of this Rule 12, Section 2);

(h) any player who hooks his fingers under the helmet of an opponent and forcibly twists his head.

**Penalty: For unnecessary roughness: Loss of 15 yards.** *The player may be disqualified if the action is judged by the official(s) to be flagrant.*

*Note: If in doubt about a roughness call or potentially dangerous tactics, the covering official(s) should always call unnecessary roughness.*

**A.R. 12.17** Third-and-20 on A30. Runner A1 runs to the A33, where he is tackled by B1, who hooks his fingers under the front of the runner's helmet, but not his facemask, and forcibly twists his head.

**Ruling:** 15 yards for unnecessary roughness. It is an automatic first down. A's ball, first-and-10, on A48.

Clipping

**Article 9** There shall be no clipping from behind below the waist against a non-runner. This does not apply to offensive blocking in close-line play where it is legal to clip above the knee(s), but it is illegal to clip at or below the knee(s).

**Penalty: For clipping: Loss of 15 yards.**

Close Line Play

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

(1) Close line play is that which occurs in an area extending laterally to the position originally occupied by the offensive tackles and longitudinally three yards on either side of each line of scrimmage.

Close Line  
Play—Roll-up  
Block

(2) In close-line play, if an offensive player's block (legal or illegal) is followed by the blocker rolling up on the back of the leg(s) of the defender, the action is illegal and is considered unnecessary roughness.

**Exception:** An offensive lineman may not clip a defender who, at the snap, is aligned on the line of scrimmage opposite another

offensive lineman who is more than one position away when the defender is responding to the flow of the ball away from the blocker.

**Example:** Tackle cannot clip nose tackle on sweep away.

(1) Doubtful cases involving a side block or the opponent turning his back as the block is being made are to be judged according to whether the opponent was able to see or ward off the blocker.

(2) The use of hands from behind above the waist on a non-runner is illegal use of hands (see 12-1-3).

(3) The use of hands on the back is not a foul when it is by:

- a) one of the kickers in warding off a receiver, while going downfield under a kick, or
- b) any player in an actual personal legal attempt to recover a loose ball.

(4) It is not considered clipping if:

- a) a blocker is moving in the same direction as an opponent, and has initial contact on the side of the opponent and then continues to contact with the opponent below his waist from behind with any part of his body, or
- b) in any case if an official has not observed the blocker's initial contact.

**A.R. 12.18** Second-and-10 on B30. B1 is hit from behind, below the waist at the B25 by A2 throwing his body across the back of B1's legs. Runner A1 is downed on B15.

**Ruling:** Clipping. A's ball second-and-20 on B40.

**A.R. 12.19** Second-and-10 on B30. A2 pushes B1 from behind above the waist at the B25. Runner A1 is down on B15.

**Ruling:** Illegal use of hands, A's ball second-and-15 on B35.

Crackback  
(Illegal)

**Article 10** At the snap, an offensive player who is aligned in a position more than two yards laterally outside an offensive tackle, or a player who is in a backfield position at the snap and then moves to a position more than two yards laterally outside a tackle, may not clip an opponent anywhere, nor may he contact an opponent below the waist if the blocker is moving toward the position where the ball was snapped from, and the contact occurs within an area five yards on either side of the line of scrimmage.

*Note 1: A player aligned more than two yards laterally outside a tackle at the snap is designated as being flexed.*

*Note 2: If runner (passer) scrambles on the play, significantly changing the original direction (broken play), the crackback block is legal.*



**Penalty: Illegal crackback block: Loss of 15 yards.**

**A.R. 12.20** Second-and-10 on A40. Flanker A1 sets up five yards outside of offensive tackle A2. At snap A1 comes back and crackback blocks B1. Contact is made at the A38 behind the offensive tackle's original position. Runner goes to 50.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-25 on A25. Illegal crackback block. Penalize from previous spot.

Roughing the  
Passer

**Article 11** Because the act of passing often puts the quarterback (or any other player attempting a pass) in a position where he is particularly vulnerable to injury, special rules against roughing the passer apply. The referee has principal responsibility for enforcing these rules. Any physical acts against passers during or just after a pass which, in the referee's judgment, are unwarranted by the circumstances of the play will be called as fouls. The referee will be guided by the following principles:

Pass Leaving  
Passer's Hand;  
1-Step Rule

(1) Roughing will be called if, in the referee's judgment, a pass rusher clearly should have known that the ball had already left the passer's hand before contact was made; pass rushers are responsible for being aware of the position of the ball in passing situations; the referee will use the release of the ball from the passer's hand as his guideline that the passer is now fully protected; once a pass has been released by a passer, a rushing defender may make direct contact with the passer only up through the rusher's first step after such release (prior to second step hitting the ground); thereafter the rusher must be making an attempt to avoid contact and must not continue to "drive through" or otherwise forcibly contact the passer; incidental or inadvertent contact by a player who is easing up or being blocked into the passer will not be considered significant;

Unnecessary  
Acts Against  
Passer

(2) A rushing defender is prohibited from committing such intimidating and punishing acts as "stuffing" a passer into the ground or unnecessarily wrestling or driving him down after the passer has thrown the ball, even if the rusher makes his initial contact with the passer within the one-step limitation provided for in (1) above. When tackling a passer who is in a virtually defenseless posture (e.g., during or just after throwing a pass), a defensive player must not unnecessarily or violently throw him down and land on top of him with all or most of the defender's weight. Instead, the defensive player must strive to wrap up or cradle the passer with the defensive player's arms.

Hits to Passer's  
Head and Use of  
Helmet and  
Facemask

(3) In covering the passer position, referees will be particularly alert to fouls in which defenders impermissibly use the helmet and/or facemask to hit the passer, or use hands, arms, or other parts of the body to hit the passer in the head, neck, or face (see also the other unnecessary-roughness rules covering these subjects). A defensive player must not use his facemask or other part of his helmet against a passer who is in a virtually defenseless posture—for example, (a) forcibly hitting the passer's

head, neck, or face with the helmet or facemask, regardless of whether the defensive player also uses his arms to tackle the passer by encircling or grasping him, or (b) lowering the head and violently or unnecessarily making forcible contact with the "hairline" or forehead part of the helmet against any part of the passer's body. This rule does not prohibit incidental contact by the mask or non-crown parts of the helmet in the course of a conventional tackle on a passer. A defensive player must not "launch" himself (spring forward and upward) into a passer, or otherwise strike him, in a way that causes the defensive player's helmet or facemask to forcibly strike the passer's head, neck, or face—even if the initial contact of the defender's helmet or facemask is lower than the passer's neck. Examples: (a) a defender buries his facemask into a passer's high chest area, but the defender's trajectory as he leaps into the passer causes the defender's helmet to strike the passer violently in the head or face; (b) a defender, using a face-on posture or with head slightly lowered, hits a passer in an area below the passer's neck, then the defender's head moves upward, resulting in strong contact by the defender's mask or helmet with the passer's head, neck, or face (one example of this is the so-called dip-and-rip technique).

Clubbing  
Passer's Arm

(4) A defensive player is prohibited from clubbing the arm of a passer during a pass or just after a pass has been thrown; however, a defensive player may grasp, pull, or otherwise make normal contact with a passer's arm in attempting to tackle him;

Hitting Passer's  
Knees

(5) A rushing defender who has an unrestricted path to the passer from any direction is prohibited from forcibly hitting the passer in the knee area or below;

Grasp and  
Control

(6) The referee must blow the play dead as soon as the passer is clearly in the grasp and control of any tackler behind the line, and the passer's safety is in jeopardy;

Passer Out of the  
Play

(7) A passer who is standing still or fading backwards after the ball has left his hand is obviously out of the play and must not be unnecessarily contacted by the defense through the end of the play or until the passer becomes a blocker, or until he becomes a runner upon taking a lateral from a teammate or picking up a loose ball, or, in the event of a change of possession on the play, until the passer, assumes a distinctly defensive position. An opponent may not unnecessarily initiate helmet to helmet contact to the quarterback at any time after the possession changes.

Passer Out of  
Pocket

(8) When the passer goes outside the pocket area and either continues moving with the ball (without attempting to advance the ball as a runner) or throws while on the run, he loses the protection of the one-step rule provided for in (1) above, but he - remains covered by all the other special protections afforded to a passer in the pocket (Numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7), as well as the regular unnecessary-roughness rules applicable to all player positions. If the passer stops behind the line and clearly

establishes a passing posture, he will then be covered by all of the special protections for passers.

**Penalty: For Roughing the Passer, loss of 15 yards from the previous spot; disqualification if flagrant.**

*Note 1: If in doubt about a roughness call or potentially dangerous tactic on the quarterback, the referee should always call roughing the passer.*

*Note 2: See 8-3-3 for personal fouls prior to completion or interception.*

**A.R. 12.21** Passer A1 is run into or tackled by defensive B1 after a pass. B1 had started his action prior to the pass.

**Ruling:** A legal action, unless the official rules that B1 had a reasonable chance to avoid or minimize the contact and made no attempt to do so.

**A.R. 12.22** Defensive B1 bats or punches the ball out of the potential passer's hand.

**Ruling:** Illegal bat or punch. Loss of 10 yards from the previous spot (12-1-6).

Blocking Below  
Waist on Kicks  
and Change of  
Possession

**Article 12** Players on the receiving team are prohibited from blocking below the waist during a down in which there is a kickoff, safety kick, punt, field goal attempt, or Try-kick.

**Exception:** Only immediately at the snap on a punt, field goal attempt, or Try-kick, those defensive players on the line of scrimmage lined up on or inside the normal tight end position can block low.

All players on the kicking team are prohibited from blocking below the waist after a kickoff, safety kick, punt, field goal attempt, or Try-kick. After a change of possession, neither team may block below the waist.

**Penalty: Loss of 15 yards**

**A.R. 12.23** Third-and-6 on B26. B1 intercepts a forward pass in the end zone and runs it out to the B31. During B1's run, A2 blocks B3 low from the side at the B28, so that A4 could tackle B1 at the B31.

**Ruling:** Illegal block. B's ball first-and-10 on B46 (12-2-12).

Use of Helmet as  
a Weapon

**Article 13** A player may not use a helmet (that is no longer worn by anyone) as a weapon to strike, swing at, or throw at an opponent.

**Penalty: For illegal use of a helmet as a weapon: Loss of 15 yards and automatic disqualification.**

**Article 14** A chop block is a foul by the offense in which one offense player (designated as A1 for purposes of this rule) blocks

a defensive player in the area of the thigh or lower while another offensive player (A2) occupies that same defensive player in one of the circumstances described in sub-sections (1) through (6) below.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Chop Block on Pass - (Engagement)       | (1) On a forward pass play, A1 chops a defensive player while the defensive player is physically engaged by the blocking attempt of A2.  |
| Chop Block on Pass (After - Engagement) | (2) On a forward pass play in which A2 physically engages a defensive player with a blocking attempt, A1 chops the defensive player after the contact by A2 has been broken and while A2 is still confronting the defensive player.  |
| Chop Block on Pass (With "Lure")        | (3) On a forward pass play, A1 chops a defensive player while A2 confronts the defensive player in a pass-blocking posture but is not physically engaged with the defensive player (a "lure").   |
| Reverse Chop Block on Pass              | (4) On a forward pass play, A1 blocks a defensive player in the area of the thigh or lower, and A2, simultaneously or immediately after the block by A1, engages the defensive player high.  |
|   | <i>Note: Each of the above circumstances in sub-sections (1) through (4), which describes a chop-block foul on a forward-pass play, also applies on a play in which an offensive player indicates an apparent attempt to pass block but the play ultimately becomes a run.</i>   |
| Chop Block on Run (by a Back)           | (5) On a running play, A1 is lined up in the backfield at the snap and subsequently chops a defensive player engaged above the waist by A2, and such block occurs on or behind the line of scrimmage in an area extending laterally to the positions originally occupied by the tight end on either side.                    |
| Chop Block on Run (by a Lineman)        | (6) On a running play, A1, an offensive lineman, chops a defensive player after the defensive player has been engaged by A2 (high or low), and the initial alignment of A2 is more than one position away from A1. This rule applies only when the block occurs at a time when the flow of the play is clearly away from A1. |
| Chop Block on Kicks                     | (7) On a kicking play, A1 chops a defensive player while the defensive player is physically engaged by the blocking attempt of A2.   |
|   | (8) On a kicking play in which A2 physically engages a defensive player with a blocking attempt, A1 chops the defensive player after the contact by A2 has been broken and while A2 is still confronting the defensive player.   |
|   | (9) On a kicking play, A1 chops a defensive player while A2 confronts the defensive player in a kick-blocking posture but is not physically engaged with the defensive player (a "lure").  |
|   | (10) On a kicking play, A1 blocks a defensive player in the area of the thigh or lower, and A2, simultaneously or immediately after the block by A1, engages the defensive player high.  |

*Note: Each of the above circumstances in sub-sections (7) through (10), which describes a chop-block foul on a kicking play, also applies on a play in which an offensive player indicates an apparent attempt to kick protect, but the play ultimately becomes a run.*

**Penalty: For Chop Block: Loss of 15 yards.**

### **Section 3 Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

**Article 1** There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct. This applies to any act which is contrary to the generally understood principles of sportsmanship. Such acts specifically include, among others:

- (a) Throwing a punch, or a forearm, or kicking at an opponent even though no contact is made.
  - (b) The use of abusive, threatening or insulting language or gestures to opponents, teammates, officials, or representatives of the League.
  - (c) The use of baiting or taunting acts or words that engender ill will between teams.
  - (d) Unnecessary physical contact with a game official.
  - (e) Removal by a player of his helmet after a play. (Exceptions: The player is not in the game or he is in or has returned to his bench area; or, the player is in the game and a time out has been called for reasons of injury, television break, charged team time out, or it is between periods.
- Taunting
- Contact-Game Official
- Removal of - Helmet

*Note 1: Under no condition is an official to allow a player to shove, push, or strike him in an offensive, disrespectful, or unsportsmanlike manner. Any such action must be reported to the Commissioner.*

**Penalty: (b), (c), (d), and (e): Loss of 15 yards from succeeding spot or whatever spot the referee, after consulting with the crew, deems equitable.**

*Note 2: Violations of (b) or (c) (above), which occur before or during the game may result in disqualification in addition to the yardage penalty. Any violations at the game site on the day of the game, including postgame, may result in discipline by the Commissioner. Any violation of (d)(above) may result in disqualification and also will include discipline by the Commissioner. An official must see the entire action for a player to be disqualified.*

*Note 3: Violations of (b) will be penalized if any of the acts are committed **directly at an opponent**. These acts include but are not limited to: sack dances; home run swing; incredible hulk; spiking the ball; spinning the ball; throwing or shoving the ball; pointing; pointing the ball; verbal taunting; military salute; standing*

*over an opponent (prolonged and with provocation); or dancing.*

*Note 4: Violations of (c) will be penalized if any of the acts occur **anywhere on the field**. These acts include but are not limited to: throat slash; machine gun salute; sexually suggestive “gestures,” prolonged gyrations; or stomping on a team logo.*

- Disconcerting (f) The defensive use of acts or words designed to disconcert an offensive team at the snap. An official must blow his whistle immediately to stop play.
- (g) Concealing a ball underneath the clothing or using any article of equipment to simulate a ball.
- Lingering (h) Using entering substitutes, legally returning players, substitutes on sidelines, or withdrawn players to confuse opponents. The clarification is also to be interpreted as covering any lingering by players leaving the field when being substituted for. See 5-2-1.
- Hide Out (i) An offensive player lines up or is in motion less than five yards from the sideline in front of his team’s designated bench area. However, an offensive player can line up less than five yards from the sidelines on the same side as his team’s player bench, as long as he is not in front of the designated bench area.
- (j) Repeatedly abusing the substitution rule (time in) in attempts to conserve time. See 5-2-2.
- (k) More than two successive 40/25 second penalties (after warning) during same down.
- Leverage (l) Jumping or standing on a teammate or opponent to block or attempt to block an opponent’s kick.
- (m) Placing a hand or hands on a teammate or opponent to gain additional height in the block or attempt to block an opponent’s kick.
- (n) Being picked up by a teammate in a block or an attempt to block an opponent’s kick.
- Leaping (o) Clearly running forward and leaping in an obvious attempt to block a field goal, or Try-kick after touchdown and landing on players, unless the leaping player was originally lined up within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped.
- Goal Tending (p) Goal-tending by a defensive player leaping up to deflect a kick as it passes above the crossbar of a goalpost is prohibited. The referee could award three points for a palpably unfair act (12-3-3).
- (q) A punter, placekicker, or holder who simulates being roughed or run into by a defensive player.
- (r) A member of the kicking team who goes out of bounds, whether forced out or voluntarily, must attempt to return inbounds in a reasonable amount of time.

**Penalty: For unsportsmanlike player conduct (e) through (r):  
Loss of 15 yards from:**

**a) the succeeding spot if the ball is dead.**

**b) the previous spot if the ball was in play.**

**If the infraction is flagrant, the player is also disqualified.**

Fouls to Prevent  
Score

**Article 2** The defense, when near its goal line, shall not commit successive or continued fouls (half distance penalties) to prevent a score.

**Penalty: For continuous fouls to prevent a score: if the violation is repeated after a warning, the score involved is awarded to the offensive team.**

Palpably Unfair  
Act (Player)

**Article 3** A player or substitute shall not interfere with play by any act which is palpably unfair.

**Penalty: For a palpably unfair act: Offender may be disqualified. The Referee, after consulting his crew, enforces any such distance penalty as they consider equitable and irrespective of any other specified code penalty. The Referee could award a score. 15-1-6.**

# RULE 13 NON-PLAYER CONDUCT

## Section 1 Non-Player Conduct

Non-Player Fouls **Article 1** There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by a substitute, coach, attendant, or any other non-player (entitled to sit on a team's bench) during any period or time out (including between halves).

### SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

(1) "Loud speaker" coaching from the sidelines is not permissible.

(2) A player may communicate with a coach provided the coach is in his prescribed area during dead ball periods.

Attendants on Field Only on Team Time Outs **Article 2** Either or both team attendants and their helpers may enter the field to attend their team during a team time out by either team. No other non-player may come on the field without the referee's permission, unless he is an incoming substitute (5-2-1).

Bench Credentials **Article 3** With the exception of uniformed players eligible to participate in the game, all persons in a team's bench area must wear a visible credential clearly marked "BENCH." For all NFL games—preseason, regular-season, and postseason—the home club will be issued a maximum of 27 credentials and the visiting club will be issued a maximum of 25 credentials for use in its bench area. Such credentials must be worn by coaches, players under contract to the applicable club but ineligible to participate in the game, and team support personnel (trainers, doctors, equipment men). From time to time, persons with game-services credentials (e.g., oxygen technicians, ball boys) and authorized club personnel not regularly assigned to the bench area may be in a team's bench area for a brief period without bench credentials. Clubs are prohibited from allowing into their bench areas any persons who are not officially affiliated with the club or otherwise serving a necessary game day function.

Restricted Areas **Article 4** All team personnel must observe the zone restrictions applicable to the bench area and the border rimming the playing field. The only persons permitted within the solid six-foot white border (1-1) while play is in progress on the field are game officials. For reasons involving the safety of participating players whose actions may carry them out of bounds, officials' unobstructed coverage of the game, and spectators' sightlines to the field, the border rules must be observed by all coaches and players in the bench area. Violators are subject to penalty by the officials.

Movement on Sidelines **Article 5** Coaches and other non-participating team personnel (including uniformed players not in the game at the time) are



prohibited from moving laterally along the sidelines any further than the points that are 18 yards from the middle of the bench area (i.e., 32-yard lines to left and right of bench areas when benches are placed on opposite sides of the field). Lateral movement within the bench area must be behind the solid six-foot white border (see Article 4 above).

Non-Bench Areas

**Article 6** Clubs are prohibited from allowing into the non-bench areas of field level any persons who have not been accredited to those locations by the home club's public-relations office for purposes related to news-media coverage, stadium operations, or pregame and halftime entertainment. The home club is responsible for keeping the field level cleared of all unauthorized persons. Photographers and other personnel accredited for field-level work must not be permitted in the end zones or any other part of the official playing field while play is in progress.

**Penalty: For illegal acts under Articles 1 through 6 above: Loss of 15 yards from team for whose supposed benefit foul was made. (Unsportsmanlike conduct.)**

**Enforcement is from:**

- a) succeeding spot if the ball is dead.
- b) whatever spot the referee, after consulting with crew, deems equitable, if the ball was in play.

**For a flagrant violation, the referee may exclude offender or offenders from the playing field enclosure for the remainder of the game.**

*Note: See 4-1-4-Note, for a foul by non-players between halves.*

Palpably Unfair Act (Non-Player)

**Article 7** A non-player shall not commit any act which is palpably unfair.

**Penalty: For a palpably unfair act, see 12-3-3. The referee, after consulting the crew, shall make such ruling as they consider equitable (15-1-6 and Note) (unsportsmanlike conduct).**

*Note: Various actions involving a palpably unfair act may arise during a game. In such cases, the officials may award a distance penalty in accordance with 12-3-3, even when it does not involve disqualification of a player or substitute. See 17-1.*

**Article 8** Non-player personnel of a club (e.g., management personnel, coaches, trainers, equipment men) are prohibited from making unnecessary physical contact with or directing abusive, threatening, or insulting language or gestures at opponents, game officials, or representatives of the League.

**Penalty: Loss of 15 yards. (Unsportsmanlike conduct.)**  
**Enforcement is from:**

- a) succeeding spot if the ball is dead;**
- b) previous spot if the ball was in play; or**
- c) whatever spot the spot referee, after consulting with the crew, deems equitable. (Palpably Unfair Act.)**

*Note: Violations which occur before or during the game may result in disqualification in addition to the yardage penalty. Any violation at the game site on the day of the game, including postgame, may result in discipline by the Commissioner.*

# RULE 14 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

(Governing all cases not otherwise specifically provided for)

## Section 1 Spot From Which Penalty in Foul is Enforced

Spots of  
Enforcement

**Article 1** The general provisions of Rule 14 govern all spots of enforcement.

*Note: The spot of enforcement for fouls by players or the actual distance penalty or both, when not specific, are subordinate to the specific rules governing a foul during a fumble, pass or kick. These in turn are both subordinate to Rule 14.*

**A.R. 14.1** Second-and-15 on A4. Quarterback A1 throws a legal pass which is incomplete. A2 held in end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety or A's ball third-and-15 on A4.

Fouls Between  
Downs

**Article 2** When a foul by a player occurs between downs, enforcement is from the succeeding spot (14-5-S.N. 3).

Fouls by Non-  
Players

**Article 3** Penalties for fouls committed by non-players shall be enforced as specifically provided under Rule 13.

Enforcement  
Spot Not  
Governed

**Article 4** When the spot of enforcement is not governed by a general or specific rule, it is the spot of the foul.

Basic Spots of  
Enforcement

**Article 5** The basic spots of enforcement (3-11-1) are:

(a) The previous spot for a forward pass (8-3-2); a scrimmage kick (9-1-17); or a free kick (6-2-5).

(b) The dead ball spot on a running play (14-1-12).

(c) The spot of snap, backward pass, or fumble (8-4-4).

(d) The spot of the foul (14-1-4 and 14-1-13).

(e) The succeeding spot for dead ball fouls. When such a foul by the defense incurs a penalty that results in the offensive team being short of the previous spot, the ball will be advanced to the previous spot.

*Note: If a foul is committed during a run, a fumble, or a backward pass, the penalty is assessed from the basic spot if:*

i) Defense fouls in advance of the basic spot

ii) Defense fouls behind the basic spot

iii) Offense fouls in advance of the basic spot

If the offense fouls behind the basic spot, enforcement is from the spot of the foul (3 and 1).

**Exceptions:**

1) All fouls committed by the offensive team behind the line of scrimmage (except in the end zone) shall be penalized from the previous spot. If the foul is in the end zone, it is a safety (14-1-11-b).

2) If a runner (3-27-1) is downed behind the line of scrimmage (except in the end zone) and the foul by an offensive player is beyond the line of scrimmage, enforcement shall be from the previous spot. If the runner is down in the end zone, it is a safety (11-4-1-a).

**A.R. 14.2** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A35. Defensive B1 illegally uses his hands on the A45 during run.

**Ruling:** The defensive foul is in advance of the basic spot (A35 where downed). Penalize from the basic spot (A35). A's ball first-and-10 on A40.

**A.R. 14.3** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A35. Offensive player A2 uses his hands illegally on the A45.

**Ruling:** The offensive foul is in advance of the basic spot (A35 where downed). Penalize from the basic spot (A35). A's ball second-and-15 on A25.

**A.R. 14.4** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A40. An offensive player illegally uses his hands on the A35.

**Ruling:** The offensive foul is behind the basic spot (spot where downed). Penalize from the spot of the foul (A35). A's ball second-and-15 on A25.

**A.R. 14.5** Second-and-10 on A30. Quarterback A1 is downed on the A40. Offensive player A2 held on the A25.

**Ruling:** Penalize 10 yards from the previous spot as the offensive foul was behind the line of scrimmage. A's ball second-and-20 on A20.

**A.R. 14.6** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A25. An offensive player held on the A32.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-20 on the A20. The offensive runner was downed behind the line of scrimmage. Enforcement is from the previous spot. Team B has option of refusing the penalty and taking the play which would then be A's ball third-and-15 on the A25 (14-6).

Fouls Out of Bounds

**Article 6** When the spot of a player foul is out of bounds between the end lines, it is assumed to be at an inbounds line on a yard line (extended) through the spot where the foul was committed. If this spot is behind an end line, it is assumed to be in the end zone. See 7-3-7 and 14-1-11.

Dead Ball Fouls

**Article 7** The penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot.

**A.R. 14.7** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes out of bounds on the A35. Offensive player A2 then clips B1 either on the A40 or A30.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the succeeding spot (out of bounds) as a foul between downs. Dead ball foul. The down is counted as the foul occurred after the ball was dead from runner A1 going out of bounds. A's ball third-and-20 on A20.

**A.R. 14.8** Fourth-and-10 on A30. A punt goes to the B30 where kicking team player A1 illegally touches the ball and then falls on it there, after which:

a) kicking team player A2 clips any place on the field.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B45.

b) receiver B1 commits a personal foul any place on the field.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B15.

**A.R. 14.9** Fourth-and-8 on B12. A legal forward pass is incomplete behind the goal line. After the incompleteness:

a) B1 roughs passer.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the succeeding spot (B12) as the pass was incomplete in the end zone on fourth down (8-1-5-a) (14-1-7). B's ball first and-10 on B6.

b) A1 clips.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the succeeding spot (B12). B's ball first-and-10 on B27.

#### Dead Ball Fouls

**Article 8** Dead ball fouls by both teams are offset except when one or both are disqualifying or as provided in 14-1-9. See 14-3-2.

**A.R. 14.10** Fourth-and-5 on B14. A legal forward pass is incomplete behind the goal line, after which:

a) A1 clips B1 and B2 roughs A2.

**Ruling:** Fouls are offset. They are dead ball fouls and the succeeding spot is B14. B's ball first-and-10 on B14.

b) A1 punches B1 and B1 punches A1.

**Ruling:** Dead ball fouls. Offsetting fouls; in addition, A1 and B1 are disqualified. B's ball first-and-10 on B14.

**A.R. 14.11** Second-and-10 on A30. A legal forward pass is incomplete, after which:

a) B1 clips A1 and A1 punches B1.

**Ruling:** Disqualify A1. Penalties offset. The down counts as the foul occurred after the down had ended. A's ball third-and-10 on A30. See 14-1-8.

b) A1 clips B1 and B1 punches A1.

**Ruling:** Disqualify B1. Penalties offset. A's ball third-and-10 on A30.

**A.R. 14.12** Receiver B1 is offside on the kickoff. The kickoff is legally out of bounds on the B30 (last touching a receiving team player) after which:

a) A1 is penalized for roughness.

**Ruling:** Rekick. Double foul (14-3-2 and 14-1-9).

b) B1 is penalized for roughness.

**Ruling:** Choice for Team A. Rekick from the A35 (offside penalty) or B's ball first- and-10 on B15. A dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot (B30). If the kick is illegally out of bounds, it is a rekick in either case (14-3-2).

Foul and Dead  
Ball Foul

**Article 9** If there has been a foul by either team during a down not including:

(a) an incomplection, or

(b) an illegal recovery of a kick (other than a free kick). Then a dead ball foul by the opponents after the down ends, Articles 7 and 8 are not enforced and if it is a double foul (14-3-1), except when the scoring team commits the dead ball foul after a score.

**A.R. 14.13** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is out of bounds on the A40, after which A2 clips any place. Team B was offside.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-25 on A15. See 14-3-1-Exc. 1.

Legal Acts After  
Dead Ball

**Article 10** There is no penalty unless the contact was avoidable and it is deemed unnecessary roughness, if a player:

(a) uses his hands, arms, or body in a manner ordinarily illegal (other than striking) during the dead ball period after a down ends, or

(b) completes a legal action (blocking or tackling) started during the down.

**A.R. 14.14** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes out of bounds on the A35 after which:

a) offensive A2 holds on the A30.

**Ruling:** Ignore the foul as it was illegal use of hands and not a personal foul. A's ball third-and-5 on A35.

b) offensive A2 clips on the A30.

**Ruling:** A personal foul during a dead ball is penalized as stated in 14-1-7. A's ball third-and-20 on A20.

c) offensive A2 strikes B1 on the A30.

**Ruling:** Disqualify A2. Penalize from the succeeding spot as in 14-1-7. A's ball third-and-20 on A20.

Spot of Enforcement Behind Offensive Goal Line

**Article 11** When a spot of enforcement is behind the offensive goal line, and the foul is:

(a) by the defense, a distance penalty is measured from the goal line (unless a touchback, one during a backward pass, or fumble, or 12-1-4-Penalty Exception), or

(b) by the offense, it is a safety. See 8-4-4 for exception.

*Note: During a loose ball there is always an offensive and defensive team, and enforcement is provided for in the specific section governing passes, fumbles, and kicks. See 3-2-3; 3-16; 3-35-1; and 14-1-5.*

**A.R. 14.15** Receiver B1 fumbles after catching a punt on his 1-yard line. The ball enters the end zone where B1 recovers. During a run in the end zone, he fumbles. A1 clips anywhere during the last fumble. B1 is downed in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the goal line. B's ball first-and-10 on B15.

**A.R. 14.16** Second-and-15 on A4. Runner A1 is downed in the end zone. During the run A2 held on the A10.

**Ruling:** Safety. Decline penalty.

**A.R. 14.17** Second-and-goal on B2. Runner A1 fumbles into B's end zone. B1 recovers in his end zone (downed) or goes out of bounds from there. While B1 is a runner, B2 fouls in the end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety.

Foul on Running Play With No Change of Possession

**Article 12** When a foul occurs during a running play (3-27-2) and the run in which the foul occurs is not followed by a change of team possession during the down, the spot of enforcement is the spot where the ball is dead.

**Exceptions:**

1) When the spot of a foul by the offense is behind the spot where dead, enforcement is from the spot of the foul.

Offensive Foul Behind Goal

2) When the spot of a foul by the offense is behind the line of scrimmage, enforcement is from the previous spot unless in offensive's end zone. Then it is a safety (14-1-11-b).

3) When the spot of a foul by the offense is beyond the line of scrimmage and a runner (3-27-1) is downed behind the line, enforcement is from the previous spot unless he is downed in the end zone. Then it is a safety, the result of the play (11-4-1).

Illegal Forward Pass

4) When the spot of foul is that of an illegal forward pass, enforcement is from the spot of the foul. This does not apply to a second forward pass from behind the line, or a pass after the ball had gone beyond the line, which is enforced from the previous

spot.

5) If the spot of a defensive foul occurs on or beyond the line of scrimmage and the ball becomes dead behind the line, penalty is enforced from the previous spot.

6) When the spot of enforcement for the defense is behind the offensive goal line, enforcement is from the goal line. See 14-1-11-a.

Defensive Foul  
Behind Line

7) When the spot of a foul by the defense is behind the line of scrimmage and the ball becomes dead behind the line, enforcement is from the spot of the foul or the spot where the ball is dead, whichever is more advantageous to the offense. If such foul incurs a penalty that results in the offended team being short of the line, the ball will be advanced to the previous spot and no additional yardage assessed.

**A.R. 14.18** While B1 is returning a kickoff, B2 holds on the B30. B1 is downed on the B20.

**Ruling:** The offensive foul is in advance of the dead ball; enforce from the dead ball spot (B20). First-and-10 on B10.

Foul Enforcement  
on Running Play  
With Possession  
Change

**Article 13** When a defensive foul occurs during a running play (3-27-2) and the run in which the foul occurs is followed by a change of possession, the spot of enforcement is the spot of the foul and ball reverts to offensive team. See 14-1-12- Exc. 5.

**Exceptions:**

1) When the spot of a foul is in advance of the spot where the offensive player lost possession, the spot of enforcement is the spot where player possession was lost and the ball reverts to offensive team.

2) When the spot of a foul by the defense is at, behind, or beyond the line of scrimmage, and such foul incurs a penalty that results in the offensive team being short of the line, the ball will be advanced to the previous spot.

*Note: When there are multiple fouls by the defense, enforcement should benefit the offense the most.*

**A.R. 14.19** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A40 where he fumbles and B1 recovers. During A1's run, B2 held on the line of scrimmage (A30).

**Ruling:** Penalize from the spot of the foul on change of possession. A's ball first- and-10 on A35.

**A.R. 14.20** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A40 where he fumbles and B1 recovers. During A1's run, B2 held on the A45.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the spot where the offensive player A1 lost possession as the foul was in advance of where player A1 lost possession. If Team A had been the only one to foul, Team B



would refuse the penalty and keep the ball. A's ball first-and-10 on A45.

**A.R. 14.21** Second-and-10 on A30. Quarterback A1 scrambles to A20, fumbles and B1 recovers. During A1's scramble, B2 holds at A22.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on A30. See 14-1-13-Exc. 2.

### SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Forward Pass  
and Kick  
Enforcements

(1) A foul during a run prior to a kick or forward pass from behind the line, is enforced as if it had occurred during a pass or kick which follows. See 8-3-2, 3, 4; 9-1-17; and 14-1-5.

(2) If an offensive player fouls behind the defensive goal line during a running play in which the runner crosses that line, the penalty is enforced from the spot where the runner crossed the goal line. See 7-3-7.

(3) After a penalty for a foul during a running play, the general provisions of 14-8-1 relative to the number of the ensuing down, always apply.

(4) Any foul prior to possession by a runner is enforced as otherwise specified.

**A.R. 14.22** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 crosses the goal line. During A1's run:

a) A2 clips on the B20.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the spot of the foul. A's ball first-and-10 on B35.

b) A2 clips in B's end zone before Runner A1 crosses the goal line.

**Ruling:** Enforcement is from the goal line. A's ball first-and-10 on B15.

c) A2 clips on the B10 after Runner A1 crosses the goal line.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. Kick off on A15.

Score and  
Personal Foul or  
Unsports-  
manlike Conduct  
Foul by  
Opponent

**Article 14** If a team scores and the opponent commits a personal or unsportsmanlike conduct foul or a palpably unfair act during the down, the penalty is enforced on the succeeding free kick unless the enforcement resulted in the score.

*Note: If the personal foul, unsportsmanlike conduct foul, or a palpably unfair act by the opponent occurred on a successful field goal or Try kick, the penalty could be enforced from the previous spot and the offensive team would retain the ball, with no score.*

**A.R. 14.23** Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is caught by end A1 who then runs for a score. Prior to the pass B1

holds A2 on the line of scrimmage.

**Ruling:** Touchdown. Kickoff on A30. No enforcement of penalty as it was not a personal foul but defensive holding.

**A.R. 14.24** Second-and-15 on A2. Runner A1 is downed in the end zone. A2 clipped in the end zone during the run.

**Ruling:** Safety. Free kick from A10. The personal foul is penalized from the succeeding spot (A20) as the foul did not result in a score.

**A.R. 14.25** B1 clips during a kickoff. B1 muffs the kick on the B5 and forces it into his end zone (new impetus) where he recovers and is downed or the kick is out of bounds from the end zone.

**Ruling:** Safety. B free kicks from its 10 as the penalty is also enforced for the clip from the succeeding spot (B20).

**A.R. 14.26** Second-and-12 on A4. Runner A1 fumbles in his end zone, where B1 recovers. During A's run:

a) A2 holds anywhere.

**Ruling:** Touchdown B. Kickoff at B30.

b) B2 holds anywhere.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the goal line. A's ball first-and-10 on A5. (14-1-13).

**A.R. 14.27** During a successful Try-kick, B1:

a) is offside.

**Ruling:** Point awarded. Enforce five-yard penalty against B on kickoff (See 11-3-3) or retry at B1.

b) piles on holder of a placekick or runs into the kicker.

**Ruling:** Point awarded. Enforce the penalty on the succeeding kickoff (11-3-3-e) or retry at B1.

## **Section 2 Location of Foul**

Half Distance  
Penalty

**Article 1** If a distance penalty, enforced from a specific spot between the goal lines would place the ball more than half the distance to the offender's goal line, the penalty shall be half the distance from that spot to their goal line.

*Note: This general rule supersedes any other general or specific rule other than for a palpably unfair act or the enforcement for intentional grounding, if appropriate.*

**A.R. 14.28** Second-and-20 on B24. A legal forward pass is caught by end A1 on the B12 and he runs to the B10. B1 roughed the passer.

**Ruling:** Half the distance from the end of the run. A's ball first-and-goal on B5.

Location of Foul

## Article 2

(a) If a foul occurs behind a goal line during a down, the penalty shall be enforced as provided for under the specific running play, pass or fumble rule involved.

(b) If a foul occurs between downs, enforcement is from the succeeding spot (14-5).

(c) If any enforcement leaves or places the ball behind a goal line, Rule 11, Section 3, 4, and 6, govern. See 14-1-11 and Note.

## Section 3 Fouls by Both Teams

Double Foul  
Without Change  
of Possession

**Article 1** If there is a double foul (3-11-2-c) without a change of possession, the penalties are offset and the down is replayed at the previous spot. If it was a scrimmage down, the number of the next down and the necessary line is the same as for the down for which the new one is substituted.

### Exceptions:

15 Yards Versus  
5 Yards

1) If one of the fouls is of a nature that incurs a 15-yard penalty and the other foul of a double foul normally would result in a loss of 5 yards *only* (15 yards versus 5 yards), the major penalty yardage is to be assessed from the previous spot.

*Note: If a score occurs on a play that would normally involve a 5 vs. 15 yard enforcement, enforce the major penalty from the previous spot.*

2) Any disqualified player is removed immediately, even when one or both fouls are disqualifying or are disregarded otherwise. See 14-1-8.

Double Foul  
Disqualification

3) If both fouls involve disqualification, the down is replayed at the previous spot. If both fouls are dead ball fouls or are treated as such (14-1-8), the fouls are disregarded and the ball is next put in play at the succeeding spot.

See Exception 1 in either case.

Illegal Touching  
and Foul

4) If the one foul by the kickers during a down is illegal touching of a scrimmage kick, the down is not replayed at the previous spot. The foul (illegal touching) by the kickers is disregarded provided the distance penalty for a foul by the receivers is enforced. If not enforced, the receivers next put the ball in play at any spot of illegal touching or at any other spot where they are entitled to possession at the end of the down. However, a postpossession foul cannot be declined in order to force B's possession at any spot of illegal touching (9-1-17-Exc. 2).

*Note: Any foul by either team after a kick ends is enforced as ordinary. See 9-1-17.*

**A.R. 14.29** Second-and-20 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A35. During the run A2 holds B1 who punches A2.

**Ruling:** Disqualify B1. Penalties offset. A's ball second-and-20 on A30.

**A.R. 14.30** Third-and-eight on B10. A2 is offside and B1 slugs on the B6 during the play. Runner A1 scored on the play.

**Ruling:** Disqualify B1. A's ball first-and-goal on B5.

**A.R. 14.31** Second-and-10 on A30. B1 is offside. Runner A1 goes to B30. During A's run A2 clips at the 50.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-25 on A15. See 14-3-1-Exc. 1.

**A.R. 14.32** Second-and-10 on A30. After the ball is dead anywhere, A1 and B2 strike each other with their fists. Runner A1 was downed on the A35.

**Ruling:** Fouls are disregarded except for disqualifying both players. A's ball third- and-five on A35.

**A.R. 14.33** Fourth-and-10 on B18. A forward pass alights in the end zone, after which A1 clips. B2 then strikes A1.

**Ruling:** Disqualify B2. B's ball first-and-10 on B18.

**A.R. 14.34** A kickoff is illegally out of bounds on the B30. After the ball is out of bounds:

a) A1 clips and B2 blocks below the waist.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B40.

b) A1 clips and B1 punches A1.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B40. B1 disqualified.

Double Foul With  
Change of  
Possession  
(Clean Hands)

**Article 2** If there is a double foul (3-11-2-c) during a down in which there is a change of possession, the team gaining possession must keep the ball after enforcement for its foul, provided its foul occurred after the change of possession (clean hands).

**Exceptions:**

1) If the kickers foul during a kickoff, punt, safety kick, or field-goal attempt before possession changes, the receivers will have the option of replaying the down at the previous spot (offsetting fouls), or keeping the ball after enforcement for its fouls.

2) If the team gaining possession fouls and loses possession, the penalties offset and the down is replayed at the previous spot.

3) If a score would result from a foul by a team gaining possession, the down is replayed at the previous spot.

Double Foul Prior  
to Change of  
Possession (Not  
Clean Hands)

If the team gaining possession fouls prior to the change of possession (not clean hands), the penalties offset and the down is replayed at the previous spot.

Double Foul After  
Change of  
Possession

**Article 3** If a double foul occurs after a change in possession, the team in possession retains the ball at the spot where the team in possession's foul occurred so long as that spot is not in advance of the dead ball spot. In that event, ball is spotted at dead ball spot.

(a) If this spot is normally a touchback, the ball is placed on the 20-yard line.

(b) If normally a safety, place the ball on 1-yard line.

(c) This enforcement also applies if one of the fouls is a post-possession foul.

(d) If there is a subsequent change of possession (e.g., fumble recovery) after the double foul, and the foul by the team in possession is in advance of the spot of the fumble, the ball is put in play by the fumbling team at the spot of the fumble.

(e) If the foul by the team in possession is a dead ball foul, the ball is put in play at the dead ball spot.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

Double Foul  
Disregarded

(1) When enforcement for a double foul is disregarded, the number of the next down, if a scrimmage down, is the same as if no foul had occurred. See 14-3-2.

(2) If there is a foul by the defensive team from the start of a snap until a legal forward pass ends, it is not treated as a double foul except as provided in 8-3-3,4.

(3) Change of possession refers to the physical change of possession from one team to the other except for kicks from scrimmage (9-1-17), and free kick (4-3-1-Note 4).

(4) If a team fouls before it gains possession on a double foul, it cannot score.

(5) Illegal touching of a scrimmage kick, while technically a foul, does not offset a foul committed by its opponent. It is *not* considered part of a double foul. See 14-3-1-Exc. 4.

(6) If there is a dead ball foul by the defensive team after a legal forward pass becomes incomplete, both penalties are enforced. See 14-1-7.

**A.R. 14.35** Second-and-10 on B40. Offensive Team A is offside. B1 intercepts a forward pass and runs it back to the A30. On the runback, B2 clips on the B45.

**Ruling:** Team B keeps the ball as its foul was not prior to change of possession and foul enforced. B's ball first-and-10 on B30.

**A.R. 14.36** On the kickoff to start the game, kicking team player A1 is offside. Receiver B1 catches the ball in the end zone and runs it back to the A20. On the runback B2 clips on the A26.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on A41 (14-3-2).

**A.R. 14.37** Fourth-and-10 on A40. Kicking team player A1 is offside. A punt hits on the B20 where receiver B1 picks it up and runs to the 50. On B's runback, B2 clips on the B40.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B25 (14-3-2).

**A.R. 14.38** Fourth-and-10 on A40. Kicking team player A1 is offside. A punt hits on the B20 where receiver B1 picks it up and runs for a touchdown. After B1 scores, B2 clips on the A10.

**Ruling:** Touchdown B. Kickoff B15 (14-3-2).

**A.R. 14.39** Second-and-five on B45. Team A is offside. B1 intercepts a pass on the B10 and runs it back to the B30 and is tackled and fumbles on the B30 where A1 recovers. On B1's run, B2 clipped on the B25.

**Ruling:** A's ball second-and-5 on B45 (14-3-2).

**A.R. 14.40** Second-and-10 on A30. Team A is offside. B1 intercepts and runs for a touchdown, then clips.

**Ruling:** Touchdown B. Kickoff B15.

**A.R. 14.41** Second-and-10 on B45. B1 intercepts a pass on the B10 and runs it back to the A30. On the runback, B2 clips on the A35 and A1 piles on runner B1 just as he is tackled on the A30.

**Ruling:** Team B retains ball at spot of its foul. B's ball first-and-10 on A35.

**A.R. 14.42** B1 receives a kick at the B10, advances to the B40 and fumbles when he is tackled. A2 recovers. During B1's run, B2 clips at the B30, after which A1 trips B3.

**Ruling:** Double foul following change of possession. B's ball at spot of its foul, first- and-10 on B30.

**A.R. 14.43** Defensive B1 intercepts on the B10. During B1's run, B2 clips at the B30 and is downed at the B40. B1 is flagrantly roughed by A1 who piles on.

**Ruling:** A1 disqualified. B's ball first-and-10 on B30.

**A.R. 14.44** Second-and-10 on B45. B1 holds tight end A1 on the line of scrimmage. B2 intercepts the ball on the B10 and runs it back to the B30 where he is tackled, fumbles, and A2 recovers the ball. A2 runs to the B20. On A2's run, A3 holds on the B25.

**Ruling:** Team A keeps the ball as it gained possession prior to its foul. A's ball first- and-10 on B35.

**A.R. 14.45** B1 receives a kickoff in the end zone and clips there. The runner advances to the B25 and is piled on by A1.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B1. See 14-3-3-b.

**A.R. 14.46** B1 legally bats a kickoff back into his own end zone, thereby creating a new impetus. After B3 picks up the ball in the end zone, B2 clips in the end zone and A1 piles on.

**Ruling:** Both fouls occurred after B gained possession. Normally, if this spot was in the end zone, the succeeding spot would be the B20. In this case, B1 created the impetus which would have resulted in a safety if the fouls had not been committed. The ball is transferred to the one-yard line. B's ball first-and-10 on B1. See 14-3-3-b.

**A.R. 14.47** Second-and-10 on B30. Offensive A1 offside. B1 intercepts in the end zone and clips there. Runner B1 is downed on the B10.

**Ruling:** Replay. A score cannot result from one of the fouls of a double foul. A's ball second-and-10 on B30. See 14-3-2.

#### **Section 4 Choice of Penalties**

Only One Penalty  
Enforced

If there is a multiple foul (3-11-2-b) by the same team during the same down, only one penalty may be enforced after the referee has explained the alternatives. The captain of the offended team shall make the choice.

Disqualified  
Player Removed

*Note: A disqualified player is always removed, regardless of any captain's choice. See 5-1-3 and 5-1-5-a.*

**A.R. 14.48** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A35. During the run, A2 clipped on the A30. Team A was offside.

**Ruling:** A multiple foul and only one penalty can be enforced. Option for defensive Team B. A's ball second-and-15 on A25 or A's ball second-and-25 on A15. If both declined, it is third-and-five on A35.

**A.R. 14.49** After a fair catch signal, B1 who did or did not signal, catches. After the catch he (a) comes to a reasonable stop or (b) unduly advances. In either case there is a foul after the catch.

**Ruling:** Enforcement is from the succeeding spot in either case. In (b) it is either a double or multiple foul.

**A.R. 14.50** B1 intercepts a pass in the end zone. He runs and is downed in the end zone. B2 holds in the end zone during B1's run. B3 clips after the ball is dead.

**Ruling:** If the penalty for holding is declined, it is B on its 10 (touchback minus 10). If the penalty for holding is enforced (which it would be), it is a safety and B free kicks from its 10 (14-1-14).

**A.R. 14.51** B1 fumbles after catching a punt on his 2-yard line. In attempting to recover in the end zone, he deliberately kicks the ball out of bounds behind the goal line.

a) B2 clips on his 4 during the fumble.

**Ruling:** If A accepts the penalty for clipping, it is B's ball on its

one-yard line. Otherwise, it is a safety. Safety kick from B10.

b) B2 clips on his 4 after the ball is out of bounds.

**Ruling:** Safety. B free kicks from its 10 (14-1-14).

### Section 5 Time of Foul

Time of Foul

If a foul occurs between downs (3-11-2-d), a distance penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot. See 14-1-7 to 10.

**A.R. 14.52** Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes out of bounds on the A35, after which offensive player A2 clips on the A30.

**Ruling:** The down counts and enforce from the succeeding spot (A35)(14-1-7-b). A's ball third-and-20 on A20.

**A.R. 14.53** Third-and-five on A30. Offensive team is offside and runner A1 fails to gain. A2 clips just as the ball is declared dead.

**Ruling:** If defensive team B declines both penalties, it is fourth-and-five on the A30. If the penalty for clipping is enforced, it is third-and-20 on A15.

**A.R. 14.54** Fourth-and-10 on A40. Kicking team player A1 first touches and recovers a scrimmage kick on the B10:

a) after an illegal recovery by A1, A2 roughs an opponent.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B25.

b) after an illegal recovery by A1, B2 roughs an opponent.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B5.

### SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Dead Ball Foul

(1) When a foul occurs simultaneously with an out of bounds or after a loose ball crosses the plane of the boundary line in the air and then first touches anything out of bounds, it is considered to be a dead ball foul.

Foul After  
Touchdown

(2) The succeeding spot for a foul after a touchdown and before a whistle for a Try is the next kickoff (3-11-2-d).

Foul Between  
Downs

(3) The time between downs is the interval during all time outs (including intermissions) and from the time the ball is dead until it is next put in play (time in). See 3-36-1, 2.

Defensive Dead  
Ball Foul

(4) For a dead ball foul by the defensive team or by either team at the end of a play not from scrimmage, see 14-8-5 and 6.

Special  
Enforcement  
Between Downs

(5) See 5-1-5-S.N. 2 for a special enforcement between downs.

**A.R. 14.55** Third-and-20 on B40. Runner A1 is out of bounds on the B15, after which offensive player A2 clips on the B20.



**Ruling:** Team A had made its first down, and as it was a dead ball foul, enforce from the succeeding spot (14-1-7-b). A's ball first-and-10 on B30.

**A.R. 14.56** Third-and-10 on B30. A forward pass is out of bounds on the B10 after which A1 clips on B15.

**Ruling:** A's ball fourth-and-25 on B45.

**A.R. 14.57** Offensive Team A has made a first down and its captain calls time out for the fourth time in the half without making a substitution for an injured player.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10.

**A.R. 14.58** Receiver B1 catches a punt on the B30 and goes out of bounds on the B40, after which B2 clips on the B35.

**Ruling:** Dead ball foul (14-1-7-b). B's ball first-and-10 on B25. Also see 14-8-6.

**A.R. 14.59** Second-and-15 on A30. Runner A1 steps out of bounds on A40, after which A2 clips on 50.

**Ruling:** Enforce from the dead ball spot (A40)(14-1-7). A's ball third-and-20 on A25.

**A.R. 14.60** Second-and-15 on A30. Runner A1 steps out of bounds on the 50, after which A2 clips on A40.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on A35 (14-1-7).

## **Section 6 Refusal of Penalties**

Refusal of Penalties

Penalties for all fouls, unless otherwise expressly provided for, may be declined by the Captain of the offended team, in which case play proceeds as though no foul had been committed.

*Note: The yardage distance for any penalty may be declined, even though the penalty is accepted.*

**A.R. 14.61** Second-and-10 on A30. A legal forward pass is completed to end A1 on the A45 where he is downed. Defensive B1 held flanker A2 on the A35 prior to the pass.

**Ruling:** Declines holding penalty which would have been five yards from the previous spot and a first down. A's ball first-and-10 on A45.

### **Exceptions:**

Disqualification Foul Removes Player

- 1) A disqualified or suspended player is always removed, even when an accompanying distance penalty is declined, or when a penalty for another foul is chosen (multiple foul).
- 2) During a down a foul occurs (includes an incomplete forward pass) for which the ball is dead immediately.
- 3) The penalty for certain illegal actions prior to or pertaining to a snap or to a free kick may not be declined, i.e., the ball remains

dead.

- a) 40/25-second violations (4-3-9).
- b) Snap made before the referee can assume his normal stance (7-3-3-c-2).

Distance Penalty Declined

4) When a 40/25-second penalty occurs prior to the snap, the defensive team may decline a distance penalty, in which case the down is replayed from the previous spot.

5) If fouls are committed by both teams during the same down (double foul), no penalty may be declined, except as provided for kickers when their only foul is illegal touching of a scrimmage kick. See 14-3-1-Exc. 4.

6) If the defensive team commits a foul during an unsuccessful Try, the offensive team may decline the distance penalty and the down is replayed from the previous spot.

**A.R. 14.62** Second-and-10 on A30. On a legal forward pass B1 interferes with eligible A1 on the B40 where the ball falls incomplete. B2 strikes A2 on the line of scrimmage.

**Ruling:** Disqualify B2 although the penalty for interference is taken. A's ball first-and-10 on B40.

**A.R. 14.63** During time in, A1 illegally recovers a kick, unduly advances, and fumbles. B2 recovers and advances beyond the spot where the penalty for delay by A1 would place the ball.

**Ruling:** B may not decline the penalty as ball is dead when A1 recovers.

### Section 7 On Incomplete Forward Pass

Illegal Forward Pass and Incomplete Forward Pass

An illegal forward pass is a foul, but an incomplete forward pass is not classed as a foul and the penalties provided therefore may not be declined.

**Exception:** If a team commits a foul during the same play in which it makes an incomplete forward pass, the captain of the offended team may elect which of the penalties is to be enforced (14-4).

*Note: If there is a dead ball foul by either team after an incompleting, enforcement is from the succeeding spot. See 14-5.*

### Section 8 Number of Down After Penalty

Number of Down After Penalty

**Article 1** After a distance penalty (not combined with a loss-of-down penalty) for a foul by the offensive team prior to (between downs) or during a play from scrimmage which results in the ball being in its possession behind the necessary line, the number of the ensuing down is the same as that of the down before which or during which the foul occurred.

Combination

**Article 2** A combination penalty involving both distance and loss

Penalty	of down is enforced for certain forward pass fouls by the offensive team.
	Examples:
Loss of Distance and Down	<p>(a) from beyond the line (8-1-1-Pen., c); or</p> <p>(b) intentionally grounded (8-3-1).</p> <p><i>Note: After a loss-of-down penalty (prior to fourth down), the number of the ensuing down is one greater than that of the previous down. If it occurs on fourth down, it is loss of the ball to the defensive team unless it is a combination penalty, in which case the distance penalty is enforced in addition to the loss of the ball. See 8-1-1 and S.N. 4.</i></p>
Foul and Change of Possession	<p><b>Article 3</b> When a foul occurs during a play from scrimmage, the necessary line remains the same regardless of any change of team possession thereafter.</p> <p><b>A.R. 14.64</b> Second-and-10 on A30. Team A is offside. A legal forward pass is intercepted by defensive B1 on the 50. B1 runs to the A40, fumbles, and A2 recovers there.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> A's ball second-and-15 on A25. (If Team B refused the penalty, it would have been A's ball first-and-10 on A40).</p>
Advance of Necessary Line First-and-10	<p><b>Article 4</b> After a distance penalty for a foul by the offensive team during a play from scrimmage which results in the ball being in advance of the necessary line, it is a first-and-10 for the offensive team.</p> <p>Articles 4 and 6 also apply to a dead ball foul of the offensive team at the end of a play from scrimmage during which it has been constantly in possession.</p> <p><b>A.R. 14.65</b> Second-and-4 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the B45. During the run, A2 clipped on the 50.</p> <p><b>Ruling:</b> After the penalty, the ball is still in advance of the necessary line for the first down. A's ball first-and-10 on A35.</p>
Defensive Foul First-and-10 for Offense	<p><b>Article 5</b> After a penalty for a foul by the defense prior to (between downs) or during a play from scrimmage, the ensuing down is first-and-10 for the offense.</p>
Defensive Foul and No First Down	<p><b>Exceptions are:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) offside;</li> <li>2) encroachment;</li> <li>3) neutral zone infraction;</li> <li>4) delay of game;</li> <li>5) illegal substitution;</li> </ol>

- 6) excess time out;
- 7) running into kicker; and
- 8) incidental facemask;
- 9) more than 11 players on the field at the snap.

In the above nine exceptions the number of the down and the necessary line remain the same unless a distance penalty places the ball on or in advance of that line, in which case it is first-and-10 for A.

**A.R. 14.66** Second-and-15 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A35. During the run defensive B1 held on the line of scrimmage.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on A40.

**A.R. 14.67** Third-and-goal on B4. The defensive team is offside and A1 gains one yard.

**Ruling:** A's ball third-and-goal on the B2 (14-2-1).

Foul After  
Change of  
Possession

**Article 6** After a distance penalty for a foul which occurs during a play after team possession has changed following a snap or free kick, it is first-and-10 for the team that was in possession at the time of the foul or at the time of the dead ball foul.

**A.R. 14.68** On a kickoff B1 runs to the B45 where he steps out of bounds, after which B2 clips on the 50.

**Ruling:** B's ball first-and-10 on B30.

Enforcement and  
First-and-10

**Article 7** After a loss of ball penalty, it is first-and-10 for the offended team after enforcement, unless the offended team free kicks following the fair catch interference.

*Note: Loss of ball results only from illegal touching of kick (other than a free kick) or a fair catch interference. See 6-2-4 and 10-1-4.*

**A.R. 14.69** Second-and-10 on A30. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass on the A40. He fumbles and A1 recovers on the A25. A1 runs to the A45. During A1's run A2 clipped on the 50.

**Ruling:** A's ball first-and-10 on A30 (change of possession).

# RULE 15 OFFICIALS: JURISDICTION AND DUTIES

## Section 1 Officials

- Officials' Manual **Article 1** By League action, the officials' manual is an integral part of the Official rules, especially in regard to the specific duties, mechanics and procedures for each official during any play situations. For that reason, many such specific items are omitted in Sections 1 to 7 to avoid needless repetition, and only the primary duties of each official are stated. Some of the technical terms used hereafter are defined only in the manual.
- Note: The terms "On Ball" or "Cover" imply that an official is nearest or in close proximity to a loose ball or runner and is in position to declare the ball dead when the down ends by rule. See 15-1-11-S.N.*
- Game Officials **Article 2** The game Officials are: Referee, Umpire, Head Linesman, Line Judge, Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge.
- Note: In the absence of seven officials, the crew is to be rearranged, on the most feasible basis, according to the other members of crew.*
- Article 3 All officials are to wear uniforms prescribed by the League (including a black cap with visor and piping for all except the referee, who will wear a white cap). All officials will carry a whistle and a weighted bright gold flag.**
- Blow Whistle **Article 4** An official is to blow his whistle:
- (a) for any foul for which ball remains dead or is dead immediately;
  - (b) to signal time out at end of a down, during which he has indicated a foul, by means of dropping his flag and provided no other official signalled time out at end of down;
  - (c) to indicate dead ball when he is covering a runner. See 7-4-1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
  - (d) at any other time, when he is nearest to ball, when a down ends. See 15-8-3.
- Note: The flag is to be used to indicate a foul. See 7-4-5-Note.*
- Crew Meeting **Article 5** Members of the crew are required to meet in their dressing quarters at least 2 hours and 15 minutes before game time.
- Officials' Dressing Room *Note: By order of the Commissioner, from the time any official first enters the dressing room, and until all officials have left it at the end of the game, no person other than clubhouse attendants or*

*those invited by the Referee shall be allowed to enter it. This prohibition includes coaches, players, owners, and other management personnel.*

Officials'  
Responsibility  
and Crew  
Conference

**Article 6** All officials are responsible for any decision involving the application of a rule, its interpretation or an enforcement. If an official errs in his interpretation of a rule, the other officials must check him before play is resumed, otherwise they are equally responsible. In the event of a disagreement, the crew should draw aside for a conference.

*Note: If because of injury, the officials' vote is tied, referee's decision will be the deciding factor. Any dissenting opinion is to be reported to the supervisor.*

**Article 7** All officials have concurrent jurisdiction over any foul, and there is no fixed territorial division in this respect. When an official signals a foul, he must report it to referee, informing him of its nature, position of ball at time of foul, the offender (when known), the penalty and spot of enforcement.

Recording Fouls

**Article 8** Each official is to record every foul he signals and the total number of officials signalling the same foul. During the game, these are to be recorded on game cards provided by league. They are to be preserved after each game in case they should be needed to revise an official's final game card.

League Game  
Reports

**Article 9** At the end of the game the officials are to record their own fouls on game cards provided by the league, and are to check them with other officials, for duplications, before leaving the dressing room.

*Note: Game cards are to be made out in accordance with the yearly bulletin issued for that purpose.*

Crew Errors

**Article 10** All members of a crew are equally responsible for any errors in Officiating Mechanics as prescribed by the Manual, and are required to call the attention of this fact to an official who had been remiss.

*Note: This applies to such errors, in mechanics or applications of rules, as tend to increase the length of the game (elapsed time) and particularly so to those which result in undue loss of playing time (Crew Time). In the latter case, if the Referee has clearly failed to signal a referee's time out as specified by rule, any official should do so. See 4-3-7 and 4-3-9.*

Coin Toss

**Article 11** Ten minutes before the opening kickoff, the entire crew is to appear on the field. Three minutes prior to the kickoff the Referee is to make the toss of the coin. He is to indicate which team is to receive and is to do the same when teams first appear on the field prior to the start of the second half. See 4-2-1 and S.N.

*Note: All officials record results of coin toss and options chosen.*

## SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

(1) During any running play (includes runbacks), or a loose ball, the nearest official is to cover and remain with the ball or runner, unless outdistanced until end of down. In such case any nearer official is to cover. See 15-2-9-Note, for Referee entering a side zone and 15-3-4 for Umpire.

(2) When a ball is dead inbounds near a sideline, during time in, the official covering is to use the clock signal to indicate this fact.

(3) Any officials not involved in an enforcement are to see that all players other than captains remain aside during any conference between Referee and captains. See 15-2-5.

Recording Time  
Outs

**Article 12** All officials must record charged team time outs.

### Section 2 Referee

Referee's  
Authority

**Article 1** The Referee is to have general oversight and control of game. He is the final authority for the score, and the number of a down in case of a disagreement. His decisions upon all matters not specifically placed under the jurisdiction of other officials, either by rule or the officials' manual, are to be final. See 15-1-6-Note and 15-1-10.

**Article 2** Prior to the kickoff to start each half and after every time out, the Referee shall sound his whistle for play to start without asking captains if they are ready. In such cases where time is in with his whistle, he is to indicate it by use of clock signal.

Ball Put in Play

**Article 3** He is to see that the ball is properly put in play and shall decide on all matters pertaining to its position and disposition at end of down. If any official sounds his whistle, the ball is dead (7-4-1). In case the Referee is informed or believes that ball was dead before such signal or down ends, he has the authority to make a retroactive ruling after consulting the crew or the official involved.

**Article 4** The Referee must notify the coach and field captain when his team has used its three charged time outs, signal both coaches when two minutes remain in a half, and positively inform the coach of any disqualified player. He may not delegate any such notifications to any other person. He will announce on the microphone when each period is ended. See 4-3-8-Exc.

Foul Options

**Article 5** After a foul, the Referee (in the presence of both captains) must announce the penalty and explain to the offended captain the decision and choice (if any) as well as number of next down and distance (usually approximate) to necessary line for any possible positions of ball. See 7-1-2. The Referee is to designate the offending player, when known. After an enforcement (7-3-2) he shall signal to spectators the nature of penalty by means of the

visual signals specifically provided for herein.

*Note: It is not necessary for the referee to explain to both captains the decision and distance to the necessary line in such cases when: the enforcement is entirely automatic and/or when there is obviously no choice.*

*Field captains only may appeal to Referee, and then solely on questions of interpretation of the rules. They shall not be allowed to question the judgment of jurisdiction of any particular official in regard to a foul or in signalling dead ball.*

Referee's  
Position

**Article 6** Prior to the snap, the Referee shall assume such a stance that he is in the clear of and behind any backfield player. This is also to be construed as including the normal path of any player in motion behind the line as well as the line of vision between such a player and the maker of a pass (forward or backward). He shall also favor the right side (if the passer is right-handed). He will count offensive players.

Measurement

**Article 7** At the end of any down, the Referee may (when in doubt or at the request of a captain unless obviously unnecessary) request the linesman and his assistants to bring the yardage chains on field to determine whether the ball has reached the necessary line. See 4-3-10-S.N. 3.

**Article 8** Prior to each snap, the Referee is to positively check the number of the ensuing down and distance to be gained with the Linesman, signal the Back Judge when to start his watch for the timing of 25 seconds (when appropriate), and know the eligible pass receivers.

Spotting Ball

**Article 9** He is primarily responsible for spotting the ball at the inbounds spot on plays from scrimmage, and should not enter a side zone to cover a runner (other than the quarterback) when the Linesman or Line Judge is in position to do so. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1.

*Note: When the ball is dead near the sideline during time in, he is not to assist in a relay to the inbounds spot, unless the umpire has been remiss or delayed in doing so (15-1-10-Note and 15-3-4). In such a case, the Umpire is to spot. See Rule 2-Note, in regard to using a new ball at start of second and fourth periods in case of a wet ball.*

### **Section 3 Umpire**

**Article 1** The Umpire has primary jurisdiction over the equipment and the conduct and actions of players on the scrimmage line.

Equipment  
Inspection

**Article 2** Before the game, the Umpire with assistance of other officials shall inspect the equipment of players. He may order any changes he deems necessary to any proposed equipment which is considered dangerous or confusing (5-3). This authority extends throughout the game.



**Article 3** He shall assist in relaying the ball:

- (a) to the inbounds spot when it is dead near a sideline during time in when feasible (15-2-9-Note);
- (b) to the previous spot after an incomplection; and
- (c) to the spot of a free kick when indicated. See 15-1-11-S.N.

Umpire's Duties

**Article 4** The Umpire shall record:

- (a) all charged team time outs during the game;
- (b) the winner of the toss; and
- (c) the score.

He is to assist the referee on decisions involving possession of the ball in close proximity to the line, after a loose ball or runner has crossed it. He and the Line Judge are to determine whether ineligible linemen illegally cross the line prior to a pass, and he must wipe a wet ball in accordance with the proper timing. He should count the offensive players on the field at the snap.

#### **Section 4 Linesman**

Linesman's  
Position

**Article 1** The Linesman operates on the side of field designated by the Referee during the first half and on opposite side during the second half unless ordered otherwise. See 1-4-Note for exception.

**Article 2** He is responsible for illegal motion, offside, encroaching, and any actions pertaining to scrimmage line prior to or at snap; and for covering in his side zone. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1; 15-2-9; and 15-3-4. He will count offensive players.

**Article 3** Prior to the game, he shall see that his chain crew is properly instructed as to their specific duties and mechanics.

*Note: Each home team appoints the official chain crew (boxman, two rodmen and alternate, drive start and forward stake indicator) subject to approval by the league office. Each member carries a working pass to that effect and it is prohibited for anyone else to work as such. The standardized yardage chains and downs box must be used and if any others are furnished this fact is to be reported to the Commissioner.*

**Article 4** The Linesman shall use a clamp on the chain when measuring for first down.

Marking and  
Chains

**Article 5** The Linesman is to mark with his foot (when up with ball) the yard line touched by forward point of ball at end of each scrimmage down. At the start of each new series of downs, he and the rodmen set the yardage chains when the Referee so signals. He positively must check with the Referee as to the number of each down that is about to start.

*Note: It is mandatory for Linesman to personally see that rear rod is accurately set and also to see that the forward rodman and*

*boxman have set the safety markers for the forward rod and the previous spot, during any series of downs, as prescribed by the officials' manual.*

Linesman's  
Duties

**Article 6** On his own side, he is to assist the Line Judge as to illegal motion or a shift and umpire in regard to holding or illegal use of hands on end of line (especially during kicks or passes), and know eligible pass receivers.

**Article 7** He is to mark out-of-bounds spot on his side of field when within his range and is to supervise substitutions made by team located on his side of field during either half.

*Note: See 15-1-11-S.N. 1; 15-2-9; and 15-3-4.*

**Section 5 Line Judge**

Line Judge's  
Duties

**Article 1** The Line Judge is to operate on side of field opposite the Linesman.

**Article 2** He is responsible for the timing of game. He also is responsible for illegal motion, illegal shift, and for covering in his side zone. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1 and 15-2-9. He will count offensive players.

**Article 3** He is responsible for supervision of the timing and in case the game clock becomes inoperative, or for any other reason is not being operated correctly, he shall take over the official timing on the field.

**Article 4** He is to time each period and (4-1-3, 4), signal the Referee when two minutes remain in a half and leave in ample time with the Field Judge to notify their respective teams of five minutes before the start of the second half.

**Article 5** He shall advise the referee when time has expired at end of a period.

**Article 6** He must notify both captains, through the Referee, of the time remaining for play not more than 10 or less than five minutes before the end of each half and must signal Referee when two minutes remain in each half. In the event that the stadium clock is inoperable, he must notify both captains, through the Referee, of the time remaining for play not more than 10 or less than 5 minutes before the end of each half and must signal Referee when two minutes remain in each half.

*Note: Upon inquiry of a field captain, he may state the approximate time remaining for play at any time during the game, provided he does not comply with such request more than three times during the last five minutes of either half, and provided it will not affect playing time near the end of a half (4-3-10).*

**Article 7** On his own side, he is to:

- (a) assist the Linesman as to offside or encroaching;

- (b) assist the Umpire as to holding or illegal use of hands on the end of the line (especially during kicks or passes);
- (c) assist the Referee as to whether a pass is forward or backward behind the line and false starts; and
- (d) be responsible for knowing the eligible pass receivers.

**Article 8** He is to:

- (a) mark the out of bounds spot of all plays on his side, when within his range (see 15-1-11-S.N. and 15-2-9);
- (b) supervise substitutions made by the team seated on his side of the field during either half (see 5-2-1);
- (c) notify the home team head coach with the Field Judge five minutes before the start of the second half.

Notify Home Team Coach

### **Section 6 Field Judge**

Field Judge's Position and Duties

**Article 1** The Field Judge will operate on the same side of the field as Line Judge, 20 yards deep.

**Article 2** The Field Judge shall count the number of defensive players on the field at the snap.

**Article 3** He shall be responsible for all eligible receivers on his side of the field.

**Article 4** After receivers have cleared line of scrimmage, the Field Judge will concentrate on action in the area between the Umpire and Back Judge.

**Article 5** In addition to the specified use of the whistle by all officials (15-1-4), the Field Judge is also to use his whistle when upon his positive knowledge he knows:

- (a) that ball is dead;
- (b) that time is out;
- (c) that time is out at the end of a down, during which a foul was signaled by a marker, no whistle has sounded in such cases; and
- (d) that even in the presence of a whistle up or down field, he is to sound his whistle when players are some distance from such signal. This will help prevent dead ball fouls.

**Article 6** The Field Judge will assist Referee in decisions involving any catching, recovery, out of bounds spot, or illegal touching, of a loose ball, after it has crossed scrimmage line and particularly so for such actions that are out of the range of the Line Judge and Umpire. See 15-1-11, S.N. 1.

Position on Field-Goal Attempt and Try

**Article 7** On field-goal attempts or Try-kick attempts, the Field Judge will station himself on the end line and cover the upright opposite the Back Judge. He, along with the Back Judge, is responsible for indication to the Referee whether the kick is high

enough and through the uprights.

### **Section 7 Side Judge**

Side Judge's  
Position and  
Duties

**Article 1** The Side Judge will operate on the same side of the field as the Head Linesman, 20 yards deep.

**Article 2** The Side Judge shall count the number of defensive players on the field at the snap.

**Article 3** He shall be responsible for all eligible receivers on his side of the field.

**Article 4** After receivers have cleared line of scrimmage, the Side Judge will concentrate on action in the area between the Umpire and Back Judge.

**Article 5** In addition to the specified use of the whistle by all officials (15-1-4), the Side Judge is also to use his whistle when upon his positive knowledge he knows:

- (a) that ball is dead;
- (b) that time is out;
- (c) that time is out at the end of a down, during which a foul was signaled by a marker, no whistle has sounded in such cases; and
- (d) that even in the presence of a whistle up or down field, he is to sound his whistle when players are some distance from such signal. This will help prevent dead ball fouls.

**Article 6** The Side Judge will assist referee in decisions involving any catching, recovery, out of bounds spot, or illegal touching, of a loose ball, after it has crossed scrimmage line and particularly so for such actions that are out of the range of the Head Linesman and Umpire.

Position on Field-  
Goal Attempt and  
Try

**Article 7** The Side Judge will line up in a position laterally from the Umpire on field goals and Try-kick attempts.

### **Section 8 Back Judge**

Back Judge's  
Duties

**Article 1** The Back Judge is primarily responsible in regard to: covering kicks from scrimmage (unless a Try-kick) or forward passes crossing the defensive goal line and all such loose balls, out of the range of Umpire, Field Judge, and Linesman, noting an illegal substitution or withdrawal during dead ball with time in (see 5-2-1-Notes), and a foul signalled by a flag or cap during down. He will count defensive team.

**Article 2** He is to time the intermission between the two periods of each half (4-1-2), the length of all team time outs (4-3-4-S.N. 1 and 2), and the 40/25 seconds permitted Team A to put ball in play (4-3-10-S.N. 1). He is to utilize the 40/25 second clock provided for by the home team. If this clock is inoperative he

should take over the official timing of the 40/25 seconds on the field.

**Article 3** In addition to the specified use of the whistle by all officials (15-1-4), the Back Judge is also to use his whistle, when upon his own positive knowledge he knows:

- (a) that ball is dead;
- (b) time is out; or
- (c) is out at end of down, during which a foul was signalled by a flag or cap, and no whistle has sounded in such cases.

Even in the presence of a whistle upfield, he is to sound his when downfield players are some distance away from such signal, and in order to prevent dead ball fouls. He should be particularly alert for item (c).

**Article 4** He shall assist the Referee in decisions involving any catching, recovery, out of bounds spot, or illegal touching, of a loose ball, after it has crossed scrimmage line and particularly so for such actions as are out of the range of the Field Judge, Linesman, and Umpire. See 15-1-11-S.N. 1. He should count the defensive players on the field at the snap.

**Article 5** The Back Judge has the absolute responsibility:

- (a) to instruct kicker and/or placekicker that "kickoff" *must* be made by placekick or dropkick.
- (b) that the height of the tee (artificial or natural) used for the kickoff conforms to the governing rules.

Notify Visiting  
Team Coach

*Note: He is to notify the visiting team at least five minutes before the start of the second half.*

### **Section 9 Instant Replay**

Instant Replay

For the 2001, 2002, and 2003 seasons only, the League will employ a system of Referee Replay Review to aid officiating for reviewable plays as defined below. Prior to the two-minute warning of each half, a Coaches' Challenge System will be in effect. After the two-minute warning of each half, and throughout any overtime period, a Referee Review will be initiated by a Replay Assistant from a Replay Booth comparable to the location of the coaches' booth or Press Box. The following procedures will be used:

**Coaches' Challenge.** In each game, a team will be permitted a maximum of two challenges that will initiate Referee Replay reviews. Each challenge will require the use of a team timeout. If a challenge is upheld, the timeout will be restored to the challenging team, but a challenge will never be restored. No challenges will be recognized from a team that has exhausted its timeouts.

**Replay Assistant's Request for Review.** After the two-minute warning of each half, and throughout any overtime period, any

Referee Review will be initiated by a Replay Assistant. There is no limit to the number of Referee Reviews that may be initiated by the Replay Assistant. His ability to initiate a review will be unrelated to the number of timeouts that either team has remaining, and no timeout will be charged for any review initiated by the Replay Assistant.

**Reviews by Referee.** All Replay Reviews will be conducted by the Referee on a field-level monitor after consultation with the other covering official(s), prior to review. A decision will be reversed only when the Referee has *indisputable visual evidence* available to him that warrants the change.

**Time Limit.** Each review will be a maximum of 90 seconds in length, timed from when the Referee begins his review of the replay at the field-level monitor.

**Reviewable Plays.** The Replay System will cover the following play situations only:

(a) Plays governed by Sideline, Goal Line, End Zone, and End Line:

1. Scoring Plays, including a runner breaking the plane of the goal line.
2. Pass complete/incomplete/intercepted at sideline, goal line, end zone, and end line.
3. Runner/receiver in or out of bounds.
4. Recovery of loose ball in or out of bounds.

(b) Passing Plays:

1. Pass ruled complete/incomplete/intercepted in the field of play.
2. Touching of a forward pass by an ineligible receiver.
3. Touching of a forward pass by a defensive player.
4. Quarterback (Passer) forward pass or fumble.
5. Illegal forward pass beyond line of scrimmage.
6. Illegal forward pass after change of possession.
7. Forward or backward pass thrown from behind line of scrimmage.

(c) Other Detectable Infractions:

1. Runner ruled not down by defensive contact.
2. Forward progress with respect to first down.
3. Touching of a kick.
4. Number of players on field.

*Note: Non-reviewable plays include but are not limited to:*

1. *Status of the clock*
2. *Proper down*
3. *Penalty administration*
4. *Runner ruled down by defensive contact*
5. *Forward progress not relating to first down or goal line*
6. *Forceouts*
7. *Recovery of loose ball in the field of play*
8. *Field goals*

# RULE 16 SUDDEN-DEATH PROCEDURES

## Section 1 Sudden-Death Procedures

Sudden-Death  
Procedure

**Article 1** The sudden-death system of determining the winner shall prevail when the score is tied at the end of the regulation playing time of *all NFL games*. Under this system, the team scoring first during overtime play herein provided for, shall be the winner of the game and the game is automatically ended upon any score (including a safety) or when a score is awarded by the Referee for a palpably unfair act.

**Article 2** At the end of regulation playing time, the Referee shall immediately toss a coin at the center of the field, in accordance with rules pertaining to a usual pregame toss (4-2-1). The visiting team captain is to again call the toss.

**Article 3** Following a three-minute intermission after the end of regular game, play shall continue by 15-minute periods with a two-minute intermission between each such overtime period with no halftime intermission.

**Exception:** Preseason and regular season league games shall have a maximum of one fifteen (15) minute period with the rule for 2 time outs instead of 3 as in a regular game and include the general provisions for the fourth quarter of a regular game.

At the end of each extra 15-minute period, starting with the end of the first one, teams must change goals in accordance with rule 4-2-2. Disqualified player(s) may not re-enter during overtime period(s).

**Article 4** During any intermission or team time out a player may leave the field.

Sudden-Death  
Timing

**Article 5** If there is an excess time out during the first and second, third and fourth, etc., extra periods, the usual rules shall apply (4-3-3 to 7).

**Article 6** Near the end of any period or during the last two (2) minutes of the second, fourth, etc., extra periods, the usual rules in regard to attempts to conserve time shall apply (4-3-10 and 5-2-1).

The rules for time outs shall be the same as in a regular game, including the last two (2) minutes of the second and fourth quarters.

**Article 7** The clock operator shall time all extra fifteen (15) minute periods (4-3-1). The Back Judge shall time the three (3) and two (2) minute intermissions, and is to sound his whistle 30 seconds before the expiration of each intermission. The referee shall sound his whistle for play to start, immediately upon the



Back Judge's signal. See 4-3-9 and 4-3-10-S.N.

**Article 8** Except as specifically provided for above, all other general and specific rules shall apply during any extra period.

# RULE 17 EMERGENCIES, UNFAIR ACTS

## Section 1 Emergencies

Non-Player on Field	<b>Article 1</b> If any non-player, including photographers, reporters, employees, police or spectators, enters the field of play or end zones, and in the judgment of an official said party or parties interfere with the play, the Referee, after consulting his crew (12-3-3 and 15-1-6), shall enforce any such penalty or score as the interference warrants.
Field Control	<b>Article 2</b> If spectators enter the field and/or interfere with the progress of the game in such a manner that in the opinion of the Referee the game cannot continue, he shall declare time out. In such a case he shall record the number of the down, distance to be gained, and position of ball on field. He shall also secure from the line judge the playing time remaining and record it. He shall then order the home club through its management to have the field cleared, and when it is cleared and order restored and the safety of the spectators, players and officials is assured to the satisfaction of the referee, the game must continue even if it is necessary to use lights.
Game Called	<b>Article 3</b> If the game must be called due to a state or municipal law, or by darkness if no lights are available, an immediate report shall be made to the Commissioner by the home club, visiting club and officials. On receipt of all reports the Commissioner shall make a decision which will be final.
Emergency Situations	<b>Article 4</b> The NFL affirms the position that in most circumstances all regular-season and postseason games should be played to their conclusion. If, in the opinion of appropriate League authorities, it is impossible to begin or continue a game due to an emergency, or a game is deemed to be imminently threatened by any such emergency (e.g., severely inclement weather, lightning, flooding, power failure), the following procedures (Articles 5 through 11) will serve as guidelines for the Commissioner and/or his duly appointed representatives. The Commissioner has the authority to review the circumstances of each emergency and to adjust the following procedures in whatever manner he deems appropriate. If, in the Commissioner's opinion, it is reasonable to project that the resumption of an interrupted game would not change its ultimate result or adversely affect any other inter-team competitive issue, he is empowered to terminate the game.
League Authority	<b>Article 5</b> The League employees vested with the authority to define emergencies under these procedures are the Commissioner, designated representatives from his League office staff, and the game referee. In those instances where neither the Commissioner nor his designated representative is in attendance

at a game, the referee will have sole authority; provided, however, that if a referee delays the beginning of or interrupts a game for a significant period of time due to an emergency, he must make every effort to contact the Commissioner or the Commissioner's designated representative for consultation. In all cases of significant delay, the League authorities will consult with the management of the participating clubs and will attempt to obtain appropriate information from outside sources, if applicable (e.g., weather bureau, police).

- Later Date **Article 6** If, because of an emergency, a regular-season or postseason game is not started at its scheduled time and cannot be played at any later time that same day, the game nevertheless must be played on a subsequent date to be determined by the Commissioner.
- Pregame Threat **Article 7** If there is deemed to be a threat of an emergency that may occur during the playing of a game (e.g., an incoming tropical storm), the starting time of such game will not be moved to an earlier time unless there is clearly sufficient time to make an orderly change.
- Interrupted Game **Article 8** If, under emergency circumstances, an interrupted regular-season or post season game cannot be completed on the same day, such game will be rescheduled by the Commissioner and resumed at that point.
- Alternate Dates, Sites **Article 9** In instances under these emergency procedures which require the Commissioner to reschedule a regular-season game, he will make every effort to set the game for no later than two days after its originally scheduled date, and he will attempt to schedule the game at its original site. If unable to do so, he will schedule it at the nearest available facility. If it is impossible to schedule the game within two days after its original date, the Commissioner will attempt to schedule it on the Tuesday of the next calendar week in which the two involved clubs play other clubs (or each other). Further, the Commissioner will keep in mind the potential for competitive inequities if one or both of the involved clubs has already been scheduled for a game following the Tuesday of that week (e.g., Thanksgiving).
- Postseason Interruption **Article 10** If an emergency interrupts a postseason game and such game cannot be resumed on that same date, the Commissioner will make every effort to arrange for its completion as soon as possible. If unable to schedule the game at the same site, he will select an appropriate alternate site. He will terminate the game short of completion only if in his judgment the continuation of the game would not be normally expected to alter the ultimate result.
- Game Resumption **Article 11** In all instances where a game is resumed after interruption, either on the same date or a subsequent date, the resumption will begin at the point at which the game was interrupted. At the time of interruption, the referee will call time out

and he will make a record of the following: the team possessing the ball, the direction in which its offense was headed, position of the ball on the field, down, distance, period, time remaining in the period, and any other pertinent information required for an efficient and equitable resumption of play.

## **Section 2 Extraordinarily Unfair Acts**

Commissioner  
Authority

**Article 1** The Commissioner has the sole authority to investigate and take appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective measures if any club action, non-participant interference, or calamity occurs in an NFL game which he deems so extraordinarily unfair or outside the accepted tactics encountered in professional football that such action has a major effect on the result of the game.

No Club Protests

**Article 2** The authority and measures provided for in this entire Section 2 do not constitute a protest machinery for NFL clubs to avail themselves of in the event a dispute arises over the result of a game. The investigation called for in this Section 2 will be conducted solely on the Commissioner's initiative to review an act or occurrence that he deems so extraordinary or unfair that the result of the game in question would be inequitable to one of the participating teams. The Commissioner will not apply his authority in cases of complaints by clubs concerning judgmental errors or routine errors of omission by game officials. Games involving such complaints will continue to stand as completed.

Penalties for  
Unfair Acts

**Article 3** The Commissioner's powers under this Section 2 include the imposition of monetary fines and draft-choice forfeitures, suspension of persons involved in unfair acts, and, if appropriate, the reversal of a game's result or the rescheduling of a game, either from the beginning or from the point at which the extraordinary act occurred. In the event of rescheduling a game, the Commissioner will be guided by the procedures specified in Rule 17, Section 1, Articles 5 through 11, above. In all cases, the Commissioner will conduct a full investigation, including the opportunity for hearings, use of game videotape, and any other procedure he deems appropriate.

# RULE 18 GUIDELINES FOR CAPTAINS

## Section 1 Guidelines for Captains

**Article 1** One hour and thirty minutes prior to kickoff:

Respective coaches designate the captain(s)—a maximum of six per team.

Coin Toss  
Option

**Article 2** Coin toss:

(a) Up to six captains per team can participate in the coin toss ceremony; only one captain from the visiting team (or captain designated by Referee if there is no home team) can declare the choice of coin toss.

(b) The team that won the toss may then have only one captain declare its option.

(c) The team that lost the coin toss may then have only one captain declare its option.

Penalty  
Option

**Article 3** Choice on Penalty Option:

Only one captain is permitted to indicate the team's penalty option.

Change of  
Captains

**Article 4** Change of Captains:

(a) The coach has prerogative of informing Referee when he wishes to make a change in team captains; or

(b) A captain who is leaving can inform the Referee which player will act as captain in his place when he is substituted for; or

(c) When a captain leaves the game, the incoming substitute is permitted to inform the Referee which player the respective coach has designated as captain.

*Note: A captain on the field has no authority to request a change of fellow team captain when that captain remains on the field.*

# PENALTY SUMMARY

## Distance Penalties

### Loss of Five Yards

Each time out in each half being in excess of three unless not notified or unless a fourth time out for injured player as specified (see charged time out penalties)	4-3-5 and 6
Delay of game, i.e.,	
exceeding 40/25 seconds in putting ball in play	4-3-9
failing to play immediately when ordered	4-3-9
repeatedly snapping ball before referee can assume normal position	4-3-9 and 7-3-3-(c)-(2)
runner repeatedly attempting to advance when securely held	4-3-9
runner remaining on ball or opponent remaining on runner to consume time	4-3-9
undue delay in assembling after a time out	4-3-9
repeatedly entering neutral zone when not otherwise encroaching	4-3-9
defense prior to snap	4-3-9
unduly delaying establishment of neutral zone especially during time in	4-3-9
illegal return	5-1-5
kickers advancing recovered kick (not behind line) causes delay	4-3-9 and 9-1-4
substituting while ball is in play unless interference	4-3-9 and 12-3-1
contacting snapper or ball	7-3-5
catcher unduly advancing after fair catch signal	4-3-9 and 10-1-2
attempting to conserve time near end of period, especially during last two minutes of half (also stop or not to stop game clock to nullify)	4-3-10
more than eleven players on field during play	5-1-1
Illegal substitution, i.e.,	
substitute entering during play, withdrawn player on field at snap or free kick (unless interference) or withdrawing on opponents' side or across end line	5-2-1
Illegal kick at free kick (ball remains dead and replay)	6-1-3
Violation of free kick formation (includes kickoff), i.e.,	
kickers failing to be behind ball or inbounds (except place kick holder)	6-1-3 and 6-1-5
receivers failing to be in bounds or behind their free kick line	6-1-5
Making short free kick	
illegally touching free kick (a) before it goes 10 yards or (b) after being out of bounds	6-2-4
kicking free kick out of bounds between goal lines unless B last touches	6-3-1
Illegal position of A players at snap, i.e.,	
having fewer than seven players on line	7-2-1

Having player neither on nor one yard behind his line unless man under center	7-2-1
Player entering neutral zone contacts opponent, causes him to charge or be offside (encroaching) or repeatedly entering it after warning (when not otherwise encroaching)	7-2-2
Being offside at snap	7-2-2
Neutral zone infraction	7-2-2
Player not reporting change in eligibility	7-2-3
Illegal motion by A at snap, i.e.,	
player not being stationary (except) one only in motion clearly backward	7-2-5
Single player not moving clearly backward at snap	7-2-5
Moving backward from on scrimmage line and not being one yard back at snap	7-2-4
Pausing less than one second after a shift	7-2-6
Being out of bounds at snap	7-2-7
Not snapping ball when prescribed	7-3-1
Illegally snapping ball, i.e.,	
failing to make backward pass	7-3-3
Failing to place ball on ground as specified	7-3-3
Failing to give impulse by continuous motion or sliding hands along ball before snap	7-3-3
Snapper moving his feet before ball leaves his hands during the snap	7-3-3
False start	7-3-4
Player under center not receiving snap	7-3-4
Snap going to receiver on line	7-3-6
Making forward pass in field of play not from scrimmage	8-1-1
Making forward pass beyond line of scrimmage (also loss of down)	8-1-1
Illegal touch of forward pass	8-1-5
Second forward pass	8-1-1
Pass after ball crossed line of scrimmage and returned	8-1-1
Ineligible player downfield on pass	8-2-2
Ineligible player downfield on kick	9-1-3
Kicking Team player voluntarily out of bounds during a punt	9-1-18
Making invalid fair catch signal	10-1-1
Catcher unduly advancing after fair catch signal, unless touched by kickers in flight or after ball strikes ground	10-1-2, 3
Illegal use of hands or arms by defense, i.e.,	
to hold an opponent who is not the runner	12-1-4
other than to ward off an opponent, to push or pull him, to get a runner or ball or to block	12-1-4
Defensive player during pass behind line pushes potential receiver behind line	12-1-4-A.R. 12.7
Running into kicker behind his line (not roughing)	12-2-6
Incidental grasp of face mask	12-2-5
<b>Loss of 10 Yards</b>	
Pass interference by team A	8-2-5

Tripping, holding, illegal use of hands, arms or body on offense	12-1-3
Assisting runner	12-1-1
Batting or punching ball, when loose (unless a pass), towards opponents' goal line or in any direction if in end zone	12-1-6
Illegally kicking ball	12-1-7
<b>Loss of 15 Yards</b>	
Not being ready to start each half on scheduled time	4-1-5
Interfering with fair catch (and catch awarded)	10-1-4
Tackling or blocking maker of a fair catch or avoidable running into	10-1-5
Head slap	12-2-2
Striking, kneeling and kicking (also disqualification)	12-2-1
Striking an opponent on head, neck, or face with palm of hands	12-2-2
Striking opponent below shoulders with forearm or elbow by turning or pivoting	12-2-4
Twisting, turning, or pulling of opponent's face mask	12-2-5
Blocking below waist on kicks and change of possession	12-2-12
Roughing the kicker	12-2-6
Falling on or piling on a prostrate player	12-2-7
Unnecessary roughness (also disqualification when flagrant), i.e.,	
striking an opponent above knee with foot or shin	12-2-8
tackling runner who is out of bounds	12-2-8
running into, throwing body against a player obviously out of the play or after the ball is dead	12-2-8
running into from behind or dropping body across back of legs of opponent who is not the runner (clipping)	12-2-9
illegal crackback	12-2-10
running into passer after ball leaves his hand	12-2-11
Chop block	12-2-14
Illegal block after fair catch signal	10-1-3
Unsportsmanlike conduct by players (also disqualification when flagrant), i.e.,	
using abusive or insulting language or gestures to players or officials or continuing acts engendering ill will	12-3-1-a
taunting	12-3-1-b
player pushing, shoving, or laying hand on official	12-3-1-c (Note 1)
attempting to disconcert A at snap by words or signals	12-3-1-e
concealing the ball under clothing or substituting article for ball	12-3-1-f
lingering	12-3-1-g
leverage	12-3-1-k
repeatedly violating substitution rule in attempt to conserve time	5-2-2 and 12-3-1-i
violating 25-second rule more than twice (same down) after a warning	12-3-1-j
leaping to attempt to block a field goal or point after touchdown unless the player was lined up on the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped	12-3-1-o
a punter, placekicker, or holder who simulates being roughed or run into	12-3-1-q



by a defensive player	
Illegal conduct by non-players (also exclusion for flagrant violations), i.e.,	
player on field communicating other than to coach in prescribed area	13-1-1
team representatives using unsportsmanlike conduct during game or between halves or sitting on bench when not qualified	13-1-1
non-players going on field without permission (other than team attendants during a team time out)	13-1-2
non-players moving along boundary lines (unless substitute warming up or coach in prescribed area)	13-1-5
<b>Loss of Half Distance to Goal Line</b>	
Pass interference by B in its end zone and previous spot is inside its 2-yard line	8-2-5
Distance penalty enforced from a spot between goal lines carrying ball more than half the distance to either goal line	14-2-1
<b>Ball Placed on 1-Yard Line</b>	
Pass interference by B in its end zone and previous spot is outside its 2-yard line	8-2-5
Intercepting momentum	11-4-1-Exc.(d)
<b>Withdrawal Penalties</b>	
Requesting fourth or more time out for injury during last two minutes of either half	4-3-4 and 4-3-5
Player being disqualified, suspended (illegal equipment), or replaced	5-1-5
Injured player or repair of legal equipment taking more than a reasonable amount of time	4-3-4 (Note) and 5-1-5
Player leaving field during time out	4-3-3 and 5-2-1
Illegal return (loss of five also)	5-1-5
<b>Disqualification Penalties</b>	
Disqualification always occurs in combination with a 15-yard penalty. Exceptions to distance penalties:	
Both teams committing disqualifying fouls (double foul)	14-3-1
Distance being declined	14-6
<b>Loss of 15 Yards</b>	
Flagrant striking, kicking, or kneeling an opponent or striking him on head or neck with heel, back or side of hand, wrist, elbow, or forearm	12-2-1
Flagrant roughing of kicker	12-2-6
Flagrant roughing of passer	12-2-11
Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct by players	12-3-1
Player using a helmet as a weapon	12-2-13
Disqualified player returning (exclusion from field enclosure)	5-1-5 and 13-1-4-Pen.
Suspended player illegally returning	5-1-5 and 13-1-4
<b>Loss of Ball Penalties</b>	
Ball being behind necessary line at end of fourth down	7-1-1
Kickers first touching kick (not a free kick) in field of play	9-1-4
Interfering with fair catch (also fair catch allowed)	10-1-4
<b>Disqualification for Entire Game</b>	

Repeat violation by player wearing or displaying illegal equipment	5-3-8-Pen.
<b>Charged Time Out Penalties</b>	
Player requesting time out (includes for injured player when one of first three time outs in each half)	4-3-3
Taking time out for injured player during last two minutes of either half (withdrawal only when fourth time out—also loss of five when fifth or more)	4-3-6
Taking time out for repair of legal equipment (also withdrawal if more than three minutes)	4-3-4 (Note)
<b>Time Penalty</b>	
Illegal conserving or consuming time near end of period (stop or not stop watch) or start watch with whistle when intent is in doubt	4-3-10
Fouling by defense, illegal touching or fair catch interfering by offense or fouling by both teams at end of half during play in which time expires (extend quarter)	4-3-11
<b>Replay Penalties</b>	
B fouling on Try which fails	11-3-3
Committing double foul unless dead ball fouls by both teams after ball is dead, the one only disqualifying foul is by B	14-1-8 and 9; 14-3-1; and 14-3-2
<b>Scoring Penalties</b>	
<b>Try Awarded</b>	
Team B committing a foul during a Try which would ordinarily result in a safety	11-3-3
<b>Score Awarded</b>	
Repeated fouling by defense (near own goal line) to prevent score by halving distance	12-3-2
<b>Touchdown Awarded</b>	
Committing palpably unfair act which deprives opponent of a touchdown	12-3-3 and 13-1-7
<b>Safety</b>	
Offense fouling anywhere, and spot of enforcement is behind its own goal line	11-4-2 and 14-1-11
Intentional grounding in own end zone	8-3-1
Making a forward pass (not from scrimmage) from within passer's end zone	8-1-1 and 14-1-11
<b>Score Not Allowed</b>	
Offending team scores after foul during down in which time expires for half (also no extension of time)	4-3-11
<b>Unsuccessful Try</b>	
Attempted kick ceasing to be in play	11-3-1
Team A committing foul during a Try which would ordinarily result:	
in loss of down or in a touchback	11-3-3
in loss of ball in field of play (not during a kick)	11-3-3
B recovering ball	11-3-5
<b>New Series Penalties</b>	
B committing a foul during play from scrimmage giving A first down irrespective of distance penalty	14-8-5

B committing a foul not giving A first down unless enforcement places ball in advance of necessary line, i.e.,	
excess time out	4-3-6
Delay of game	4-3-9
Illegal substitution	5-2-1
Illegal equipment (suspension)	5-3-1
Encroaching on neutral zone or being	
offside	7-2-2
B touching snapper or ball	7-3-5
B interfering in field of play with a pass from behind line (distance penalty in addition when personal foul)	8-2-5 and 12-2-1
<b>Combination Penalties</b>	
<b>Loss of Down and Five</b>	
Making a forward pass from scrimmage from beyond the line	8-1-1
<b>Loss of Down and 10</b>	
Intentionally grounds pass (from behind line)	8-3-1
<b>Loss of Ball and 15</b>	
Interfering with a possible fair catch in field of play (also fair catch)	10-1-4
<b>Touchback</b>	
Kickers illegally touching kick (not free kick) in receiver's end zone	9-1-4
Fair catch interfering or running into maker of in receiver's end zone	10-1-5
<b>Score, Distance or Disqualification</b>	
Referee makes equitable ruling:	15-2-1
player committing palpably unfair act	12-3-3
non-player committing palpably unfair act	13-1-7
<b>Miscellaneous Situations</b>	
<b>Safety</b>	
Ball in possession of team behind or out of bounds behind own goal line and impetus which sent it in touch came from:	
Player of that team (unless pass violation by A is enforced from previous spot)—Safety	11-4-1 and 2
<b>Kickoff Out of Bounds Between Goal Lines</b>	
Receiver's ball at inbounds spot when last touched by them	6-3-1
Receiver's ball 30 yards from previous spot	6-3-1
<b>Ball Remains Dead</b>	
Fouls relating to the start of a down (ball not being in play even if the action begins)	14-6
Actions which delay game	4-3-9 and 10
Snapping before referee assumes normal position	7-3-3
<b>Ball Dead Immediately</b>	
Committing acts designed to consume time	4-3-10
Kickers recovering a short free kick	6-2-2

Down ending because of and at the time of a foul, i.e., any forward pass becoming incomplete anywhere	8-1-5
Kickers advancing after recovery of a scrimmage kick unless behind line other than a Try-kick (9-1-4)	9-1-6 and 11-3-5
Any kick touching receiver's goal post or cross bar unless scoring field goal	6-3-2; 9-1-14; and 11-6-1
Official sounding whistle (even when accidental)	7-4-3
Any receiver catching after fair catch signal unless touched in flight by kickers	10-1-2
<b>Penalty Enforced From Goal Line</b>	
Defense fouling and spot of enforcement is behind goal line of offense	14-1-11
Runner crosses opponent's goal line and spot of enforcing foul by teammate during run is behind defense goal line	14-1-12
<b>Penalty Enforced on Next Free Kick</b>	
A team scoring and opponents commit a personal or unsportsmanlike conduct foul or a palpably unfair act, during down	14-1-14