

2011 SRI Bulletin 3

Free Kicks

Question: On a kickoff, how is the BJ to determine if there are 12 Team K players on the field? We used to have a check-off of 2 officials counting K, but is the BJ now by himself?

Answer: On a free kick, both the BJ and LJ are responsible for counting K, even though the LJ comes out to the top of the numbers to help line up Team R.

Comment: Officials should never allow a free kick to happen when K has 10 or 12 players on the field. BJ's should count K when they are out in the middle with the kicker; if the count is not 11, use preventive officiating and tell the kicker or another player to count his team and make the necessary adjustment. If the BJ has still has 12 when he gets to the sideline, because players are late in scrambling on and off, do what you do in any other type of scrimmage play; stop the kick from happening, penalize the kicking team 5-yards for illegal substitution. If you can't keep the kick from happening; if the 12th player comes on just as or after the ball is kicked, then the penalty is 15-yards for illegal participation. Again, try to avoid throwing the flag.

Illegal Use of Hands

Play: After the snap, the center grabs the thigh of the player next to him to form a wedge.

Ruling: This is interlocked blocking. 10-yard penalty. Rule 9-2-1b.

The "Flex"

We are seeing some offensive teams use a "flex" motion to get into their final stance before the snap. This movement occurs primarily during short-yardage situations and is almost always designed to cause the defense to encroach. Rule 7-1-7b says "any act clearly intended to cause B to encroach" is a false start. Rule 7-1-7a talks about a false start being "simulating action at the snap."

Consequently, a shift in which the offensive line lifts up **ABRUPTLY**, even though the linemen have not put their hand(s) near the ground, is a **False Start**, and must be penalized. It is not necessary for the defense to encroach; the shift must be judged on its' own merits.

On the other hand, there is no penalty if this movement is done in a smooth, non-jerky manner. Rules 2-39 and 7-2-6 allow for legal shifts. Officials need to be consistent in making this call. Call it the same way in the 1st quarter as you would in the 4th quarter!

Tinted Eyewear

Glasses or sport goggles with clear, transitional, tinted or dark lenses are legal equipment. Rule 1-5-3c4b only prohibits eye shields that are not clear. I understand that the logic behind this may be confusing, but a player may wear tinted or dark glasses under a clear eye shield.