

2013 Regular Season Bulletin 2

Illegal Participation

Play: B78, a defensive lineman, has his helmet come off as he is rushing the passer. He continues to rush the passer. Once the forward pass is in the air, B78 turns and pursues the play. The pass is caught by A2 who starts to advance. During this period, B78 continues to pursue the play, catches up with and tackles A2. The play gained 14 yards for the offense.

Ruling: There are two fouls on B78 for illegal participation. The first occurred when he continued to rush the passer, and the second when he pursued and ultimately tackled A2. These are multiple fouls and Rule 10-2-4 tells us that only one foul may be enforced. It is more advantageous for Team A to enforce the second penalty as it occurred during the running play portion of the down following the loose-ball play portion of the down. The basic spot is the spot where A2 was tackled. Decline the first foul and penalize Team B 15-yards from that spot.

Holding

Play: Snapper A50 snaps the ball and charges forward and is engaged by nose guard B70. This engagement results in A50 belly-flopping onto the field, with B70 then laying on top of A50 with his arms extended, pinning A50 to the ground.

Ruling: Rule 9-2-3c covers a defensive player laying on top of an offensive player. The phrase "...restrain an opponent...." is important. If a player is restrained by an opponent laying on top of him and is "pinned to the ground," then you have a foul for illegal holding. Should the reverse occur with the offensive player pinning the defensive player to the ground, that's also illegal holding, covered under Rule 9-2-1c.

Illegal Batting

Play: Team A is lined up in a "shotgun" formation. Prior to the snap, one of the receivers goes in motion. As soon as the receiver is behind the offensive tackle nearest his original position, the ball is snapped to the QB, who then in one motion, without ever actually receiving/gaining full possession of the snapped ball, "taps" the ball forward to the receiver who has continued running behind the line, and now receives the ball and heads upfield.

Question: Would this be a legal forward pass? If it is not a legal forward pass, would a dropped ball by the receiver be handled as a fumble/loose ball? Is the play itself even legal?

Answer: Rule 2-40-1 tells us that a snap is a backwards pass. The exchange or "tap" of the ball between the QB and receiver does not meet the Rule 2-31-1 definition of a pass, which requires that the ball in player possession be thrown. In the instant case, the ball was never possessed, therefore, it cannot be thrown. Rule 9-7-3 says that it is illegal for the offense to bat a backwards pass forward. Thus, a flag for illegal batting. Should the receiver muff the illegal bat, the ball remains live and is treated as a fumble.

Reporting Fouls

Please remember that the Referee needs an accurate report from any official who has thrown a penalty flag. This includes noting if the foul is a live ball or dead ball foul. The difference may depend on whether a team is awarded a new series following penalty enforcement or whether the ball is turned over on downs if the line-to-gain is not made. Officials are asked to review pages 26-28 in the Oregon Mechanics/Philosophies Manual.

Free Kicks

Play: On a kickoff, the kicker starts to approach the ball to kick and changes his mind or stumbles. His foot barely touches the ball and knocks it off the tee. He then picks up the ball and puts it back on the tee.

Ruling: Rule 2-12-1 tells us this is first touching by Team K with the ball belonging to Team R at the spot where the kicker picked it up. However, there has been no legal kick because the kicker's touching of the ball was accidental and not intentional as required by the definition of a kick, Rule 2-24-1. Let's use common sense, blow the whistle immediately and reset everyone for the kick and treat this as if the wind had blown the ball off the tee.

Training Videos

Two training videos have been posted to the Central Hub. The first shows a low block at the snap by a team that has lined up in a shotgun formation. The second video is from the LeMonnier series and shows several examples of pre-snap situations.