

2017 Post Season Bulletin 1

After reviewing numerous game reports, it appears that the first round of playoffs has produced some interesting situations. Please review the following plays as similar action could happen in your game.

Free Kick Out of Bounds

Play: “K kicks off and the ball comes to rest close to the sideline, but inbounds. R85 in an attempt to pick up the ball, steps out of bounds at the 10-yard line. What is the ruling? Does R get possession of the ball on the 10? Or does R gain possession on the 35?”

Ruling: When a receiving team player who is out of bounds is the first to touch a kick, the kicking team has caused the ball to go out of bounds. So...in this play, when R85, who has a foot out of bounds, touches the ball, the ball is out of bounds. R’s choices are 1) penalize K five yards and re-kick, 2) take the ball at the R-10, or 3) take the ball at the R-35. Look at Rule 6-1-9 and the (b) part of Case Book play 6.1.9 Sit. C.

Unfair Act

Play: “On a try they lined up in a swinging gate formation. Just after the ball was snapped to a player at least 7 yards deep, the back behind him did a backwards flip. I did not think it was done to taunt the defensive team but to distract their players. The player who received the ball ran into the end zone for 2 points.”

Ruling: Legal play. Don’t think the act described rises to the level of a Rule 9-10 foul for an unfair act. The backflip happened after the snap, after the play had started. Would this be any different if the player dropped to the ground and faked an injury instead of backflipping? Remember, a player faking an injury at or before the snap creates a Rule 9-6-4e foul for deception.

Helmet Coming Off

Play: “Late in the 2nd quarter, the QB was tackled for a loss. The tackler had the QB in a legal but high grip with arms around the helmet. At the end of the tackle, the QB’s helmet came off because the tackler pulled it off. I did not judge it to be a face mask foul because the tackler had not grasped the facemask or any helmet opening. I let the QB stay in the game because it was after the play was over and the helmet came off due to the tackler pulling it off.”

Ruling: Without a foul that’s directly attributable to the helmet coming off, the QB has to sit out one play. Rule 3-5-10d.

Question: Should wrestling a player to the ground via a head lock be a foul for unnecessary roughness? Likewise, any tackle by the neck? Food for thought!