

Rule **7** Snapping, Handling and Passing the Ball

SNAP INFRACTION

7.1.3 SITUATION: A's linemen take their positions and snapper A1 has made preliminary adjustments. Prior to the snap A1: (a) tilts the ball to an angle of 90 degrees; or (b) lifts the ball and pushes it forward in order to make a deep snap or; (c) rotates the ball end for end; or (d) removes both hands. **RULING:** Legal in (a). It is a snap infraction in (b), (c) and (d). The covering official will sound his whistle immediately, signifying the ball remains dead. A snap infraction is a dead-ball foul and the penalty of 5 yards is administered from the succeeding spot. (2-40-2, 4-1-6, 7-1-2, 7-1-3, 10-4-4b)

ENCROACHMENT

7.1.5 SITUATION: Following the ready-for-play signal, but before A has taken any positions on the line of scrimmage, B1 is either in or beyond the neutral zone facing his teammates while giving defensive signals. **RULING:** Encroachment by B1. (2-8)

7.1.6 SITUATION A: When A comes to the line of scrimmage, the linemen assume their final positions such that: (a) five linemen penetrate the vertical plane through the waistline of the snapper while the head of the sixth penetrates the plane drawn through the waistline of the nearest teammate who is on his line of scrimmage; or (b) one interior lineman has his head penetrating the neutral zone while the other linemen are all penetrating the vertical plane of the snapper's waistline. **RULING:** In (a), it is illegal formation which is a foul simultaneously with the snap. The offended team will be given the option of taking the result of the play or accepting the penalty and replaying the down. In (b), it is encroachment for a player to have any part of his body penetrating the plane of the neutral zone after the ready and the snapper has placed his hand(s) on the ball. This is a dead-ball foul and the ball will not be permitted to become live. (2-8, 2-25-2, 2-32-9, 7-1-5, 7-2-3)

7.1.6 SITUATION B: Snapper A1 is positioned over the ball following the ready signal, but has not yet placed his hand(s) on it. Either: (a) A2; or (b) B1, breaks the plane of the neutral zone. Both players adjust their position and get behind the neutral zone; or (c) A1 has a hand on the ground and then stands erect to call out a blocking assignment. **RULING:** No infraction in either (a), (b) or (c). In (c), the snapper is not restricted as are other linemen after placing a hand on or near the ground. (7-1-7c)

7.1.6 SITUATION C: A1 takes his position over the ball and B1 breaks the plane of the neutral zone: (a) after A1 has placed his hands on the ball following a change of possession with A having a new series and following the referee's ready-for-

play signal; (b) after A1 has placed his hands on the ball on first, second, third or fourth down when no change of possession has occurred and the covering official on the previous play has given the dead ball signal following the previous play; or (c) after A1 has placed his hands on the ball following a change of possession with A having a new series, but the referee has not yet given the ready-for-play signal. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), the ball has been declared ready for play and encroachment foul has occurred. In (c), no foul has occurred as encroachment restrictions are not in effect.

7.1.6 SITUATION D: Following the ready signal, snapper A1 positions over the ball and immediately places his hands on the ball and adjusts it. The rest of the team then take presnap positions. The coach of B realizes his team has only 10 players on the field and he sends B1 into the game. The ball is located at one end of the field so that B1 is on A's side of the neutral zone when he enters the field. He crosses through the neutral zone, but is onside prior to the snap. **RULING:** It is not encroachment for the substitute to cross through the neutral zone. An entering substitute cannot encroach until after he has established himself as a player on his team's side of the neutral zone. If B1 is unable to get onside prior to the snap, it will be a foul for illegal substitution. This foul occurs simultaneously with the snap and if penalized would be administered from the previous spot. Similarly, it is not encroachment when a replaced player crosses the neutral zone in leaving the field. (2-32-15, 3-7-2, 3-7-6, 7-1-2, 10-4-2a)

7.1.6 SITUATION E: Snapper A1 takes his position over the ball and places one or both hands on the ball. The ready-for-play signal is given and as A1 begins the motion to snap the ball, B1 swipes at the ball attempting to dislodge it from the snapper, touching the snapper's hand or the ball: (a) prior to the snapper releasing the ball for the snap; or (b) after the snapper has released the ball on the snap. **RULING:** In (a), this is a foul for encroachment. Repeated attempts at this act could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct by the game officials. In (b), there is no foul.

FALSE START/NO FALSE START

7.1.7 SITUATION A: A is on its line of scrimmage with A1 directly and immediately behind the snapper in a position to receive the ball. As the count is started, but before the ball is snapped: (a) A1 steps backward from the line of scrimmage and while so doing he fakes throwing a forward pass. B1 then charges across the neutral zone and contacts A2; or (b) A1 quickly withdraws his hands from under the snapper and goes in motion. Reaction on the part of B2 causes him to charge across the neutral zone and contact A3; or (c) A1 lifts the heel of one foot as a signal to start A2 in motion. **RULING:** False start by A1 in both (a) and (b). These are acts interpreted to cause an opponent to encroach and, therefore, are

infractions. It is the intent of the rules to prohibit such acts. Whether or not the action by A1 draws B into the neutral zone should not be the determining factor in ruling a false-start foul. The action by A1 in (c) is legal. (7-1-7b)

7.1.7 SITUATION B: On fourth and four from A's 35-yard line, K comes to the line in a scrimmage formation. After calling a few signals, A1 says "shift." All 11 players then make a movement. Some players move to a new position for a scrimmage-kick formation, while four interior linemen remain in place and move from a hands-on-thighs position to an upright position and finally to a three-point stance. **RULING:** This could be ruled a false start if the covering official(s) determine that it was designed to cause B to encroach. In judging the offensive team's intent, the game officials should consider whether players move to a new position, the speed and abruptness of movement, down and distance and if any player pretends to have the ball or otherwise simulate action at the snap with the start of a play. (7-1-7, 7-2-6)

7.1.7 SITUATION C: On third and 10 from A's 40-yard line, all team A players are set. While quarterback A1 is calling signals, defensive back B1, starting from a position eight yards behind his line of scrimmage, runs toward the neutral zone. B1 stops directly in front of tackle A4 but does not enter the neutral zone. In response to B1's charge, A4 (a) does not move, or (b) flinches. **RULING:** No foul in (a). In (b), A4 is guilty of a dead-ball foul for false start. If in the covering official's judgment the action by B1 was for the purpose of disconcerting or hindering A, it is a foul for a disconcerting act. In this case, the covering official should sound the whistle before the snap. (7-1-7, 7-1-9)

7.1.7 SITUATION D: Prior to the snap, A has eight players on the line of scrimmage. A1, who is on the end of the line, shifts and becomes a back. A2, who prior to A1's change of position was an interior lineman, is now on the end of the line. A2 rises from his three-point stance and moves to a new position 5 yards farther out on the line of scrimmage where he again assumes a three-point stance. **RULING:** A legal shift by A2. Restrictions that apply to interior linemen no longer apply to A2 after A1 moved off the line and assumed a position as a back, thus making A2 an end. (2-39)

7.1.9 SITUATION: B1 calls defensive signals loudly: (a) before A takes its set position; or (b) during the time A1 is giving his cadence count; or (c) while A1 is using audibles. **RULING:** Legal in (a). In (b) and (c), if in the covering official's judgment the action by B1 was for the purpose of disconcerting or hindering A, it is a foul for a disconcerting act. In this case, the covering official should sound his whistle before the snap. (7-1-9)

ILLEGAL FORMATION

7.2.1 SITUATION A: Following a second down play, A89 comes onto the field as a substitute for A93 but A89 stops 5 yards from the sideline as his team is ready to snap the ball. Following the snap, A89 goes down field and catches A1's

legal forward pass for a first down. **RULING:** This is an illegal formation and if the penalty is accepted it would be marked off from the previous spot. Depending upon the situation (see 9-6-4d), this could also be illegal participation. (9-6-4d)

7.2.1 SITUATION B: With fourth down and 8 from K's 20-yard line and K in scrimmage-kick formation, K1 kicks the ball, but at the snap, K had only four players on the line of scrimmage. After the play is over, R1 throws K2 to the ground and swings at him. **RULING:** These fouls would be enforced separately and in order. R may elect to accept the distance penalty from the previous spot and re-kick, or accept the distance penalty from the succeeding spot. Then, R's dead-ball personal foul is then enforced (and R1 is disqualified) with the ball being placed 15 yards behind the end of the run. (10-4-2 EXCEPTION)

7.2.1 SITUATION C: Following a second down play that ends inbounds, the 40-second play clock begins. With 35 seconds on the play clock, A89 (a) who was in on the previous play and remains outside the 9-yard marks until the snap or (b) who comes onto the field as a substitute and is outside the 9-yard marks and remains outside the 9-yard marks until the snap. With 32 seconds on the play clock, the umpire places the ball, moves to position and the ball is ready for play. **RULING:** In (a) and (b) this is an illegal formation and if the penalty is accepted it would be marked off from the previous spot. Depending upon the situation (see 9-6-4d), this could also be illegal participation. After the ball is ready for play, each player of A who participated in the previous down and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks, before the snap.

LOCKING LEGS

7.2.2 SITUATION: Following the snap on a kick try, the offensive linemen "step down" and interlock feet. **RULING:** Legal. However, prior to the snap only the linemen next to the snapper are permitted to lock legs with the snapper.

POSITION AT THE SNAP

7.2.3 SITUATION A: Following the huddle, after A comes to its line of scrimmage, quarterback A1 is breaking the plane of the waistline of the snapper, and slot back A2 has a part of his body breaking the plane of the waistline of his nearest teammate who is on the line of scrimmage. **RULING:** This is an illegal formation foul at the snap. While quarterback A1 may be breaking the plane of the waistline of the snapper or nearest teammate legally on the line of scrimmage, it is illegal for any other back to break the plane of the waistline of his nearest teammate who is on the line of scrimmage. (2-32-3)

7.2.3 SITUATION B: At the snap, A1 is in a position which is neither on the line of scrimmage nor clearly in the backfield. A1 is not on the line because neither his head nor his foot is breaking the plane through the waist of the snapper, and he is not a back because he is penetrating the plane through the waist of his nearest teammate, end A2, who is on the line. The position of A1 is inside that of end A2,

who is clearly on the line of scrimmage. When the ball is snapped, both A1 and A2 go downfield and A1 catches a pass. **RULING:** The position of A1 is illegal when the ball is snapped. A1 is an ineligible receiver because he was not clearly a back. His advance beyond the neutral zone is illegal and when he touches the pass, it is illegal touching. This is a multiple foul and B has a choice of which penalty to accept. (7-5-6a, 7-5-13)

PLAYER NUMBERING REQUIREMENTS

7.2.5 SITUATION A: Team A comes to its line of scrimmage with: (a) ends 80 and 71, tackles 70 and 81, guards 60 and 61, and center 50; or (b) ends 80 and 81, guards 72 and 75, tackles 62 and 63, and center 50 and one halfback numbered 76. **RULING:** The formations in both (a) and (b) are legal because there are five players numbered 50-79 on the offensive line. In (a), a player at tackle wearing 81 and the end wearing 71 are both ineligible receivers; 81 because of his position and 71 because of his number. In (b), number 76, a halfback, is not an eligible receiver because of the number he is wearing. (7-5-6a)

7.2.5 SITUATION B: Team A sets with five players on its line numbered 50-79, while two teammates, both on the same side, are numbered 89 and 41. Number 41 is on the end and 89 is inside and next to him. Number 41 shifts to the backfield and Number 32, on the opposite side of the ball, shifts so he is on that end of the line. A touchdown pass is thrown to Number 89. **RULING:** The touchdown counts. The fact that A lined up with a player wearing an eligible receiver's number in the interior line does not eliminate the possibility of this player being eligible to receive a pass following a shift. (7-5-6a)

7.2.5 SITUATION C: Team A comes to its line of scrimmage with tackles 70 and 71, guards 60 and 61, center 50 all on the line of scrimmage, a quarterback and three other backs in the backfield, and: (a) ends 80 and 89 on the line of scrimmage; (b) end 80 on the line of scrimmage and no other players on the field; (c) end 80 on the line of scrimmage and player 89 meeting neither the definition of a back nor a lineman; or (d) players 80 and 89 on the field meeting neither the definition of a back nor a lineman. **RULING:** The formations and numbering in both (a) and (b) are legal because there are five players numbered 50-79 on the line of scrimmage, a minimum of five players on the line of scrimmage, and no more than four players meeting the definition of a back, including the quarterback. In both (c) and (d), the formations are not legal as only the quarterback in this formation is permitted to be neither a lineman nor a back.

7.2.5 SITUATION D: Substitute A1 comes in to replace A2. Both are wearing Number 88. **RULING:** No violation unless both participate at the same time. (1-4-3, 7-2-5c)

NUMBERING EXCEPTION

7.2.5 SITUATION E: With fourth and 6 from the K20, Team K lines up with A21 as the left end; A34, A66, A25, A64 and A86 in the traditional five tackle-guard-center-guard-tackle spots; and A11 on the right end. All are on the line of scrimmage. Players A10, A20 and A5 are in the backfield with A79 lined up in the deep, position as a potential kicker. A25 places his hand on the ball. Prior to the snap, (a) A20 shifts to the line of scrimmage on the right of A86 and left of A11 and sets for one second before the ball is snapped; or (b) A11 steps back off of the line and A20 shifts to replace him as the end, where both are set for a second before the ball is snapped. Who are the eligible receivers prior to the ball being touched by B? **RULING:** Once A25 placed his hands on the ball, all players in between the ends (A34, A66, A25, A64 and A86) become ineligible and remain ineligible throughout the down. In (a), once A20 assumed a position on the line of scrimmage, A20 became ineligible as he was covered up by A11. A79 is ineligible by number. Only A21, A11, A10 and A5 are eligible on the play. In (b), because A11 stepped back off of the line first, A20 becomes eligible as he would be the end. A21, A20, A11, A10 and A5 are eligible. **COMMENT:** When A is in scrimmage-kick formation, it does not have to kick and may kick when it is not in this formation. [2-14-2, 2-32-9, 2-39, 7-2-5b(2), 7-5-6]

7.2.5 SITUATION F: It is fourth and 6 for A from its own 40-yard line. A initially sets in a scrimmage-kick formation with Number 83 as an interior lineman and four other linemen numbered 50-79. Prior to the snap, B1 encroaches. The penalty is administered leaving A only 1 yard to go for a first down. A now lines up with Number 83 on the end of the line and through substitution has five interior linemen numbered 50-79. Number 83 goes downfield and catches a touchdown pass. **RULING:** A legal play. The dead-ball encroachment foul allowed A to cancel the use of the numbering exception and to use Number 83 as an eligible receiver. The numbering exception is canceled, or must be renewed, following a dead-ball foul, a charged time-out or TV/radio time-out, the end of a period or an official's time-out. **COMMENT:** If a place kick is used for a try, it is a scrimmage kick and the numbering exception may be used. (7-2-5b EXCEPTIONS)

ILLEGAL SHIFT

7.2.6 SITUATION A: A comes to its line of scrimmage with the quarterback A1 standing behind the snapper. Upon signal, A2 goes in motion and then A1 assumes his final position under the snapper. **RULING:** When the ball is snapped, it will be an illegal shift because A2 did not reset for one second along with the other A players after A1 shifted. Motion cannot be started legally until all 11 players of A have been set simultaneously for at least one second. (2-39)

7.2.6 SITUATION B: Backs A1 and A2 simultaneously move to new backfield positions prior to the snap. In less than one second after both are stationary: (a) A3 goes in motion and is in motion at the snap; or (b) the ball is snapped. **RUL-**

ING: Illegal shift in both (a) and (b). Following a huddle or a shift, all 11 players of A must come to a complete stop and must remain stationary simultaneously for at least one second before the snap or before a player goes in motion. (2-39)

7.2.6 SITUATION C: After A has been set for more than one second, back A1 goes in motion. While A1 is in motion, back A2 takes one step forward and then resets. A1 is still in motion when the ball is snapped two seconds after A2 reset. **RULING:** Illegal shift. A2's movement was a shift and the failure of the entire team to set for at least one second after the shift and before the snap is a foul at the snap. (2-39)

ILLEGAL MOTION, SHIFT

7.2.7 SITUATION: The quarterback by voice command has signaled his teammates to assume a set position while he is standing upright behind the center. The quarterback steps forward and places his hands under the center to receive the snap: (a) at the instant the snap is made; or (b) which is made after he is motionless, but prior to one second having elapsed; or (c) which is made after he is motionless for one second; or (d) which is made after he is motionless for one second, but while he is stepping backward with one foot as the snap is made. **RULING:** In (a), it is illegal motion. In (b), it is an illegal shift. In (c), it is legal. In (d), it is legal unless a teammate is also in motion at the snap. **COMMENT:** If the quarterback drops his hands under the snapper without stepping forward, it is a shift and not motion. (2-39, 7-2-6)

PLANNED LOOSE BALL

7.2.8 SITUATION: Between downs, quarterback A1 informs the referee via a "pre-arranged" confidential signal that during the next down A will run its trick play involving a planned loose ball. (a) Snapper A2 does not release the ball and guard A3 takes it and begins to advance; or (b) A1 takes the snap and places the ball on the ground after which guard A3, who has legally turned and faced his own goal line, scoops it up and advances; or (c) A1 takes the snap and hands the ball to guard A3, who has legally turned to face his own goal line. **RULING:** In (a), it is a snap-infracton, dead-ball foul whether or not the referee was informed. In (b), it is an illegal planned loose ball play even though the referee was notified (7-2-8). In (c), it is a legal play. (7-2-4) **COMMENT:** In all cases, the referee should inform A1 immediately that a planned loose ball play is not legal and thus attempt to prevent a foul.

ILLEGAL HANDING

7.3.2 SITUATION: Quarterback A1 takes the snap and hands the ball forward to back A2. The handing is done: (a) behind; or (b) in; or (c) beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Legal in (a) and (b), but a foul in (c). **COMMENT:** The position of the ball determines whether it is behind, in or beyond the neutral zone, however, the position of the player recovering the ball determines whether or not it is forward handing. (2-19-2, 2-19-3)

JOINT POSSESSION OF PASS, KICK OR FUMBLE

7.4.3 SITUATION: An offensive and defensive player simultaneously gain possession of a live ball which is a: (a) legal forward pass and both players are touching inbounds; or (b) scrimmage kick muffed by R beyond the neutral zone; or (c) fumble by A1 on a running play. **RULING:** The down is ended in each situation. In (a), complete pass and the ball belongs to A at the spot of completion. In (b), the ball belongs to R at the spot of recovery, and in (c), the ball belongs to A at the spot of recovery. (6-2-6, 7-5-4)

FORWARD PASS – LEGAL/ILLEGAL

7.5 COMMENT: The following chart should help game officials distinguish between the various possible fouls that can occur when an ineligible receiver touches or is touched by the ball, including accidentally striking, muffing or catching, and with basic fouls regarding ineligibility. ENZ refers to expanded neutral zone.

TABLE 7-5

| Pass Interference (7-5-7, 7-5-10) | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs be- hind neutral zone? | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs in neutral zone (includ- ing ENZ)? | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs beyond the ENZ? |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Accidentally striking ineligible | No | No | If contact is made against an opponent that is deemed to be pass interference, yes, 15 yards. If no interference, no. |
| Muff by ineligible | No | No | If contact is made against an opponent that is deemed to be pass interference, yes, 15 yards. If no interference, no. |
| Catch by ineligible | No | No | If contact is made against an opponent that is deemed to be pass interference, yes, 15 yards. If no interference, no. |

| Ineligible Downfield (7-5-12) | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs behind neutral zone? | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs in neutral zone (including ENZ)? | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs beyond the ENZ? |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Accidentally striking ineligible | No | No | If not yet touched, yes, 5 yards |
| Muff by ineligible | No | No | If not yet touched, yes, 5 yards |
| Catch by ineligible | No | No | If not yet touched, yes, 5 yards |
| Illegal Touching (7-5-13) | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs behind neutral zone? | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs in neutral zone (including ENZ)? | Is it a foul if the act/ touching occurs beyond the ENZ? |
| Accidentally striking ineligible | No | No | No |
| Muff by ineligible | Yes, 5 yards, loss of down | Yes, 5 yards, loss of down | Yes, 5 yards, loss of down |
| Catch by ineligible | Yes, 5 yards, loss of down | Yes, 5 yards, loss of down | Yes, 5 yards, loss of down |

7.5.1 SITUATION: Quarterback A1 runs wide and while near the neutral zone, decides to throw a forward pass. As A1 releases the ball: (a) his foremost foot is touching the ground in the neutral zone, or (b) his foremost foot is breaking the plane of B's side of the neutral zone. **RULING:** In (a), it is a legal forward pass. In (b), it is an illegal forward pass because the location of the passer's foremost foot was beyond the neutral zone. (7-5-2b)

7.5.2 SITUATION A: Quarterback A1 drops back to pass, but is unable to find a receiver and: (a) throws the ball to the ground; or (b) throws the ball to the ground in an area occupied by only defensive players; or (c) deliberately throws the ball at the legs of onrushing defensive linemen. In (b) and (c), the pass does not meet any of the 7-5-2d EXCEPTIONS. **RULING:** An illegal forward pass in (a), (b) and (c). Penalize A 5 yards from where the run ended and count the down in each situation. (7-5-2b, d)

7.5.2 SITUATION B: Quarterback A1 is positioned directly behind the snapper. (a) A1 muffs the snap, but is able to take the ball from the ground and spike it forward as in 7-5-2d EXCEPTION 1; or (b) A1 receives the snap, but his forward spike attempt hits snapper A2's leg and ricochets into the air. A1 catches the ball and immediately spikes it forward. **RULING:** An illegal forward pass in both (a) and (b). Once the ball touches the ground, 7-5-2d EXCEPTION 1 is not permitted as the ball may not be grounded legally thereafter using this exception. In order to

be a "direct snap" and therefore meet the allowance within the exception, the ball must go immediately from the snapper to the person in position to take the snap without being muffed, fumbled or otherwise mishandled.

7.5.2 SITUATION C: Quarterback A1 drops back to pass and whether or not under defensive pressure, throws the ball forward: (a) at the feet of two onrushing defensive linemen; or (b) inbounds or out of bounds to an area not occupied by an eligible receiver. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass in (a). In (b), the game officials must determine if (1) the passer has been beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap, and (2) if the pass went beyond the neutral zone extended including the extension beyond the sideline. In (b), if both (1) and (2) were true, the pass is legal under 7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2, the down counts and there is no foul. In (b), if either (1) or (2) were not true, it is an illegal forward pass as it does not meet 7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2.

7.5.2 SITUATION D: Runner A1 advances 5 yards beyond the neutral zone to B's 3-yard line where he is tackled. As he is going down, A1 simulates a fumble by tossing the ball forward into the end zone where A2 downs it. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass by A1. The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the pass, plus loss of down. If A1 is contacted after releasing the ball, it is not roughing the passer since he lost that protection when he threw the pass from beyond the neutral zone. (9-4-4)

7.5.2 SITUATION E: A1 throws a legal forward pass: (a) which is tipped by B1 behind the expanded neutral zone and A1 catches the pass and then throws a second pass which is completed to A8; or (b) to A5 who is behind the line of scrimmage and who then throws another forward pass to A11 who advances the ball for a first down. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass in (a) and (b). (7-5-2d EXCEPTION 1)

FOULS PRIOR TO "SPIKE"

7.5.2 SITUATION F: In the last few seconds of a half, A1 completes a pass to A2 at B's 20-yard line. The ball is properly spotted and the referee marks it ready for play and signals the game clock to start. In the rush and confusion to stop the game clock, A's snapper and quarterback A1 are the only A players in legal position when the ball is snapped and legally "spiked" by A1. A foul for illegal formation occurs at the snap. **RULING:** The "spike" is legal. Since the spike is legal, the only applicable foul is for illegal formation. The reason for the game clock stoppage was the incomplete forward pass; therefore, the game clock shall start on the snap. **COMMENT:** The determination by the referee as to whether or not the act was intended to illegally conserve time must be applied using Rule 3-4-6. (7-5-2 EXCEPTION)

7.5.2 SITUATION G: Quarterback A1 is in shotgun formation directly behind the snapper. A2 is legally in motion behind but parallel to the line of scrimmage. At the snap, (a) A1 receives the snap and sensing an all-out blitz, throws the ball to the ground; or (b) A2 who is directly behind the snapper at the time receives the

snap and sensing a loss of yardage, immediately throws the ball to the ground. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass in (a) and (b). The exception purposefully and intentionally only allows for a player to throw the ball to the ground to conserve time, not to conserve yardage.

CATCH/NO CATCH/SIMULTANEOUS CATCH

7.5.4 SITUATION A: Airborne A1 and B1 simultaneously gain possession of a legal forward pass near the goal line and return to the ground where: (a) they alight in the field of play inbounds; or (b) they alight in the end zone with the ball; or (c) A1 lands in the end zone and B1 in the field of play inbounds; (d) B1 comes down in the end zone and A1 lands in the field of play; or (e) A1 lands in the end zone and B1 lands out of bounds. **RULING:** In (a), the ball is dead and belongs to A at the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when A1 and B1 contacted the ground inbounds. It is a touchdown in (b). In (c) and (d), the ball becomes dead and the pass is complete at the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when the players contacted the ground inbounds. If the ball has penetrated the plane of the goal line in either (c) or (d), it is a touchdown. In (e) incomplete pass. **COMMENT:** In order for there to be a simultaneous catch, opposing players must have simultaneous joint possession, and both must be in contact with the ground inbounds. The players' contact with the ground does not have to be exactly simultaneous. If A1 and B1 jointly possess a forward pass while airborne and both land inbounds, it is a completed pass, the ball is dead at that point and belongs to A. If there is simultaneous recovery of a fumble, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team which last had possession. If there is simultaneous recovery of a free kick or scrimmage kick, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team. (4-2-2c, 7-5-4, 8-2-1)

7.5.4 SITUATION B: A pass from A1 is possessed by A2 while he is in the air above B's end zone. A2 loses control when he is contacted by B1 while in the air. The ball: (a) falls to the ground; or (b) is caught by eligible A3 in B's end zone; or (c) is intercepted and downed by B2 in the end zone. **RULING:** In (a), the pass is incomplete. In (b), it is a touchdown and in (c), it is a touchback. (8-2-1b, 8-5-3c)

7.5.4 SITUATION C: B1 attempts to intercept a pass while in the air and: (a) the ball touches one hand and then deflects to the other without securing possession, after which B1 lands with his first step inbounds and second out of bounds; or (b) deflects the ball into the air, but is able to catch it after he comes down inbounds; or (c) is juggling the ball as he takes two steps inbounds and then out of bounds. **RULING:** Interception in (b), but not in (a) and (c).

7.5.4 SITUATION D: A passed or fumbled ball is near a sideline. B1 gets the ball in his hands while his foot is on the sideline. **RULING:** The ball becomes dead when touched. Since touching precedes player possession, there is no "catch" or "recovery." (2-36-2)

7.5.4 SITUATION E: B1 leaps in the air over his 2-yard line and has A's pass in his grasp. He returns to the ground in his end zone inbounds. **RULING:** B1's

interception was not completed until he returned to the ground inbounds. He now possesses a live ball in his own end zone and may attempt to run it out or down it in the end zone for a touchback. Momentum is not involved.

7.5.4 SITUATION F: B1 leaps in the air over his 2-yard line and has A's pass in his grasp. He returns to the ground on his 1-yard line and his momentum carries him back into his end zone where he is downed. **RULING:** Since B's interception was made in the field of play and his momentum carried him into his end zone where he is downed, the momentum exception is in effect and the spot of the interception, B's 1-yard line, is the spot from which B will start its series.

7.5.4 SITUATION G: A8, in B's end zone, leaps in the air to catch a pass and is contacted by B2 forcing A8 to come down inbounds on B's 1-yard line where he is downed. **RULING:** Touchdown, since A8's forward progress was stopped over B's end zone by B2's contact. Even though the catch was not made until A8 came down inbounds, his forward progress was stopped by B2's contact resulting in A possessing the live ball in its opponent's end zone, hence, a touchdown.

7.5.4 SITUATION H: A pass from A1 is thrown near the intersection of the sideline and the goal line. A2, running toward the goal line, leaps and possesses the pass at the 3-yard line and is forcibly: (a) contacted from the front by B1 (not carried) so that A2 contacts the ground out of bounds opposite B's 4-yard line; or (b) contacted from the side by B1 and A2 first contacts the ground out of bounds opposite the 3-yard line; or (c) grasped from behind and carried by B1 so that first contact with the ground by A2 is out of bounds 1 yard beyond the goal line; or (d) tackled from behind by B1 so that A2 first contacts the ground in the end zone. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), it is an incomplete pass. In (c) and (d), it is a touchdown. (2-4-1, 2-15-1, 2-15-2, 8-2-1)

7.5.4 SITUATION I: Airborne A1 jumps high in an attempt to catch a legal forward pass. While still in the air, he is tackled by B1 and held momentarily without touching the ground before he is carried (a) backward toward A's goal line, or (b) forward toward B's goal line. He then lands out of bounds with the ball. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), completed pass as forward progress was stopped. The ball is dead at the yard line where the forward progress of the receiver was stopped. (2-4-1, 4-2-2a)

RESTRICTIONS END

7.5.6 SITUATION: Quarterback A1 drops back and throws a forward pass toward the sideline to A2 who is behind the neutral zone. A2 then throws a forward pass to A3 15 yards downfield. (a) B1 blocks A2 behind the line prior to A2 touching the ball; or (b) B1 tackles A2 prior to A2 touching the pass; or (c) B1 pushes A3 prior to A3 touching the pass, and B1 intercepts. **RULING:** Legal block in (a) since pass interference restrictions for B do not apply to a forward pass that does not cross the neutral zone. In (b), it is a holding foul by B1. Legal contact in (c) since there are no pass interference restrictions on an illegal forward pass. It should be noted that A2 has also committed a foul for an illegal forward pass.

7.5.7 SITUATION A: A1 throws a screen pass behind the neutral zone. The pass is touched in or behind the neutral zone by B1 and continues in flight beyond the neutral zone: (a) A2 has gone downfield and blocks B2 before the pass is touched; or (b) ineligible A2 is downfield beyond the neutral zone before A1's pass is in flight. **RULING:** Legal in both (a) and (b) as B1 touched the pass in or behind the neutral zone. **COMMENT:** The key to whether the action in (a) or (b) is legal is determined by the fact that the pass was touched by B in or behind the neutral zone, even though it went beyond the neutral zone. In both (a) and (b) A2's being downfield and blocking is not restricted because the pass was touched by B in or behind the neutral zone. Therefore, A2 is not an ineligible downfield illegally.

7.5.7 SITUATION B: A1 drops back and throws a screen pass to flanker A2 who is behind the neutral zone. B2 has come across the line and deflects the pass so that its flight is altered and the pass goes beyond the neutral zone. Ineligible A8 has gone beyond the expanded neutral zone before the pass is released. **RULING:** Since B has touched the forward pass in or behind the neutral zone A8 is not downfield illegally.

7.5.7 SITUATION C: A1 throws a pass that is touched behind the neutral zone by B7. The pass touches ineligible A2 beyond the neutral zone and falls incomplete. **RULING:** Illegal touching has not occurred since B touched the ball in or behind the neutral zone.

7.5.8 SITUATION: A81 goes downfield and pushes off B22 (pushes him away from A81 to help him make his cut) and cuts toward the sideline and catches A1's pass. A81's push occurred prior to B4 tipping the pass. **RULING:** This contact can be ruled pass interference as restrictions for Team A begin at the snap.

7.5.9 SITUATION: On second down, quarterback A1 drops back and throws an underhand shovel pass forward to back A2 who is behind the neutral zone. A2 throws the ball back to A1. A1 then throws the ball forward beyond the neutral zone to A3. B1 blocks A3 away from the ball and intercepts A1's pass. **RULING:** Legal contact by B1 and an illegal forward pass by A1. Pass interference restrictions for B players ended when the shovel pass was touched by any player. B will likely decline the penalty and keep the ball. If the foul for illegal forward pass is accepted, it is 5 yards and a loss of down from the spot of the pass, but A retains the ball.

PASS INTERFERENCE

7.5.10 SITUATION A: During a forward-pass play in which the ball crosses the neutral zone, A1, an ineligible receiver, is illegally downfield and: (a) B1 illegally contacts him with an elbow; or (b) A1 blocks B1. **RULING:** In (a), the personal foul by B1 and A1's foul for being downfield combine to make a double foul and the down will be replayed. The contact by B1 is not defensive pass interference because A1 was an ineligible receiver. Defensive pass interference may occur only against eligible receivers. Had there been no contact and had ineligible A1 touched such a pass, the result would have been illegal touching. In (b), it is a multiple foul for an ineligible illegally downfield and also offensive pass interference. (7-5-6a, 7-5-13, 10-2-1, 10-2-3)

7.5.10 SITUATION B: Eligible receiver A1 blocks an opponent 10 yards downfield while the pass is in flight. The pass is completed to A2 who is: (a) beyond the neutral zone; or (b) behind the neutral zone when he catches the ball. When the covering official observes the block by A1 during a forward pass, he immediately drops a flag to indicate an infraction. **RULING:** It is a foul for pass interference in (a), and a legal block in (b). It was proper for the covering official downfield in (b) to indicate a possible infraction because he had no way of knowing whether the pass was beyond the neutral zone. (7-5-7)

7.5.10 SITUATION C: A1 or B1 is in a position to catch or intercept a forward pass beyond the neutral zone. An opponent, who is in the vicinity, turns his back to the ball. The opponent directs his attention to A1 or B1 and waves his arms to block the vision of the potential receiver or interceptor but does not make contact. **RULING:** No foul.

7.5.10 SITUATION D: B3 gets in the path of a receiver, A4, without making contact. B3's presence results in either: (a) A4 slowing down to avoid contact or, (b) A4 initiating contact in an effort to reach the ball. **RULING:** No foul in (a), but in (b) a foul by A4 for offensive pass interference. (7-5-10a)

PASS INTERFERENCE – INELIGIBLE DOWNFIELD

7.5.10 SITUATION E: A1 throws a screen pass behind the neutral zone. The pass is touched by B1 and continues in flight beyond the neutral zone: (a) A2 has gone downfield and blocks B2 before the pass is touched; or (b) ineligible A3 is downfield beyond the neutral zone before A1's pass is in flight. **RULING:** Legal in both (a) and (b) because B1 touched the pass in or behind the neutral zone. (2-31-3, 7-5-6b, 7-5-12)

7.5.11 SITUATION A: A11 is running a deep post pattern and B11 (a) contacts A11 knocking him off his intended path or (b) grabs A11's jersey. In both situations, the pass has already crossed the neutral zone and the pass is clearly away from the intended receiver. **RULING:** In (a) there is no foul for pass interference, and (b) there is a foul for illegal holding.

7.5.11 SITUATION B: A11 runs straight up the field and after the ball has left the passer's hand, B9 illegally blocks A11 and throws him off his pattern. The pass is completed to A10 who was clearly on the opposite side of the field. **RULING:** There is no pass interference call on B9; however, a flag should have been dropped for the illegal block.

7.5.12 SITUATION A: At the snap, interior lineman A1 moves about 3 yards downfield and finding no one to block, retreats behind the neutral zone and blocks for A2 who eventually throws a forward pass which crosses the neutral zone. **RULING:** A1 is an ineligible who is illegally downfield. The prohibition against ineligibles downfield for A starts at the snap, and the fact A1 was no longer downfield when the pass was thrown has no bearing on the ruling. **COMMENT:** Ineligible A players may advance into the expanded neutral zone during a down in which a legal forward pass is thrown, but may not advance beyond the expanded neutral zone.

7.5.12 SITUATION B: Before A1 throws a pass beyond the neutral zone, A2 contacts lineman B1 on his line and drives him back 4 yards. **RULING:** Offensive pass interference by A2 because he has driven B1 beyond the expanded neutral zone. (2-28-2)

ILLEGAL TOUCHING

7.5.13 SITUATION A: Ineligible receiver A2 is behind, in or beyond his neutral zone and has committed no act against a defender that could be ruled pass interference when a forward pass by A1: (a) accidentally strikes him in the back; or (b) is muffed by him; or (c) is caught by him. **RULING:** In (a), there is no foul for illegal touching. In (b) and (c), it is illegal touching. The acts in both (b) and (c) are intentional and not accidental as in (a). **COMMENT:** Game officials should be very clear in explaining penalty options if the same act constitutes more than one foul as listed above, as each of the fouls has a different penalty.

LINEMAN BECOMES ELIGIBLE

7.5.13 SITUATION B: A1's forward pass is deflected by B1 and then caught by interior lineman A2 behind the neutral zone. **RULING:** No foul has occurred as A2 became an eligible receiver after B1 touched the pass.

Rule **8** Scoring Plays and Touchbacks

SCORING

8.2.1 SITUATION: Runner A10 dives into the pylon at the intersection of the goal line and sidelines and the ball breaks the plane of the goal line. **RULING:** Touchdown. Assuming the pylon was placed properly, the ball broke the plane of the goal line prior to the touching of the pylon.

8.2.2 SITUATION A: During (a) A9's run for a touchdown, B2 holds A1, or (b) K1's field goal, R2 holds K1. **RULING:** In (a), A will likely keep the score and may choose to enforce the penalty on the try or enforce the penalty on the subsequent kickoff. In (b), K may keep the points and have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot, or have the penalty enforced from the previous spot and replay the down. (8-4-3)

8.2.2 SITUATION B: On the down in which time expired for the second period, Team A: (a) scores a field goal or (b) scores a touchdown. In both cases, the opponents of the scoring team commit a live-ball foul. **RULING:** In (a), the offended team has the option to keep the score, with the penalty assessed on the second

half kickoff as this is the succeeding spot. In (b), the offended team has the option to keep the score, with penalty assessment on either the try or on the second half kickoff as this would be the subsequent kickoff.

8.2.2 SITUATION C: During the down in which time expires for the fourth period, the opponents of Team A foul on a play where Team A: (a) scores a touchdown that leaves Team A trailing by one point, (b) scores a field goal which ties the game, or (c) scores a touchdown that leaves team A trailing by one point and the opponents also foul on the try. **RULING:** In (a), Team A has the option to keep the score, with the penalty assessed on the try. The penalty cannot be assessed on the first play of overtime as there is no subsequent kickoff. In (b), Team A has the option to keep the score, with penalty assessment on the first play of overtime as the first play of overtime is the succeeding spot. In (c), Team A may only have the penalty for the opponent foul on the scoring play enforced on the try but cannot carry over the penalty to overtime; however, the foul by the opponent during the try could be enforced on the first play of overtime at Team A's choice.

8.2.2 SITUATION D: A1 scores a touchdown. After the score, B commits a (a) dead-ball, (b) unsportsmanlike or (c) nonplayer foul prior to the initial ready-for-play on the try. **RULING:** In (a), (b) or (c), Team A may elect to enforce the foul at the succeeding spot or on the subsequent kickoff.

8.2.2 SITUATION E: Prior to the ball being thrown during a play in which A1 catches a touchdown pass and advances for a touchdown, B1 holds A2 to prevent him from going out for a pass on the side away from the play. When given options, A elects to enforce the penalty for the defensive holding foul on the subsequent kickoff. During the successful two-point try, B1 is guilty of holding A1. Does A have the option of having the 10-yard penalty added on to the previous 10-yard penalty on the subsequent kickoff? **RULING:** Yes. The fouls did not occur during the same down, so these are not multiple fouls and, therefore, they may both be enforced on the subsequent kickoff. (8-3-5b, 10-2-4)

8.2.2 SITUATION F: (a) During a touchdown run by A1, B1 holds; (b) On the ensuing successful kick try, there is a foul by B2. **RULING:** In (a), the designated representative of A is given options for the foul during the touchdown run prior to the try. If A accepts the penalty for B's holding foul during the touchdown run, A may accept the score and attempt the try from the 1½-yard line or accept the score and have the penalty enforced on the subsequent kickoff. In (b), after the try, A may accept and replay the try from the 3/4-yard line or accept the 1-point try and enforce the penalty for B's try foul on the subsequent kickoff. It is within the rules for A to have both penalties enforced on the subsequent kickoff.

8.2.2 SITUATION G: A1 scores a touchdown. During the scoring play, (a) A commits an unsportsmanlike foul or (b) B commits an unsportsmanlike foul. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), the touchdown will be scored. The offended team will have the option to enforce the penalty on the try or carry it to the subsequent kickoff.

TRY

8.3.1 SITUATION: A has a huge lead and scores another touchdown in the third period, and the captain of A informs the referee that his team does not wish to attempt the try. **RULING:** There is no choice. A shall attempt a try, or at least snap the ball.

8.3.2 SITUATION A: Following a penalty, the try is from B's 8. A1 advances to B's 4 and fumbles. The fumble rolls into the end zone where B1 intentionally bats or kicks the ball across the end line. **RULING:** The measurement for the penalty for B1's foul is from B's 4 where A1's run ended. The new try is from the 2-yard line anywhere between the hash marks. (9-7-1, 9-7-2, 10-3-2, 10-3-3, 10-4-3)

8.3.2 SITUATION B: During a try by place-kick, the kick by K1 is blocked by R1 and recovered by K2, who advances across R's goal line. **RULING:** The try is unsuccessful. The try and down ended when the attempted place kick was blocked and it was obvious the kick would not score. The covering official should sound his whistle immediately when it is apparent the kick will not score. (4-2-2i)

8.3.2 SITUATION C: During a try, A1 completes a pass to A2 in the end zone and: (a) ineligible A3 was illegally beyond the neutral zone; or (b) A4 interfered with B1; or (c) B2 interfered with A2. **RULING:** In (a), if the 5-yard penalty is accepted, the try will be repeated. In (b), if the 15-yard penalty is accepted, the try will be repeated. In (c), A undoubtedly will accept the result of the play and enforce the penalty from the succeeding spot. (7-5-10 PENALTY, 7-5-12 PENALTY, 8-3-5)

8.3.3 SITUATION A: During a try, a fumble by A1 is nearly at rest on the 3-yard line when a muff by B1 is judged by the game official to be a new force causing the ball to go into B's end zone where B2 recovers and: (a) downs the ball in the end zone; or (b) advances to his 10-yard line. **RULING:** The try ends and the ball becomes dead when B2 recovers. In any ordinary down, such a dead ball in the end zone would be a safety, therefore, one point is scored for A in both (a) and (b). (4-2-2i, 8-1, 8-5-2b)

8.3.3 SITUATION B: During a non-kick try, A1 fumbles the ball, and in scrambling to recover the ball and avoid defenders, retreats into his own end zone where he is tackled in possession of the ball. **RULING:** The ball is dead and no points are awarded. B cannot score on a try.

8.3.5 SITUATION A: During a kick try: (a) B1 holds and the try is successful; or (b) A1 holds and the try is successful; or (c) B1 roughs the kicker/holder and the try is unsuccessful. **RULING:** In (a), A may accept the score and have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or enforce it from the previous spot and replay the down. In (b), B undoubtedly will accept the penalty and replay. In (c), A obviously would accept the penalty and replay. (8-3-7, 10-5-2)

8.3.5 SITUATION B: During a successful two-point try: (a) B1 roughs the passer; or (b) B2 holds tight end A8. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), A may accept the score and have the penalty assessed from the succeeding spot.

8.3.5 SITUATION C: During a successful two-point try, B1 is flagged for pass interference against A1. After the untimed down is over, A1 taunts B1. **RULING:** A may accept the score and have the penalty enforced at the succeeding spot. However, B may accept the penalty for the dead ball foul by A, and have 15 yards marked off from the spot where the ball is placed after enforcement of B's penalty. The ball would then be free-kicked from K's 40-yard line.

FIELD GOAL

8.4.1 SITUATION A: The field-goal attempt: (a) goes directly over an upright; or (b) is clearly over the crossbar between the uprights. In (a) and (b), the ball is blown back by the wind so that it drops into B's end zone. **RULING:** In (a), it is an unsuccessful attempt because the ball did not penetrate the plane of the goal between the inside of the uprights extended. It is a legal field goal in (b) and it doesn't matter if the ball comes back above or below the crossbar. (8-4-1c)

8.4.1 SITUATION B: K has the ball on R's 40-yard line for a free kick. The ball is in this position following: (a) a fair catch; or (b) an awarded fair catch; or (c) a safety followed by a couple of dead-ball penalties. In all three cases, K1 place kicks the ball between the uprights and over the crossbar. **RULING:** Field goal in (a) and (b), and touchback in (c). [8-4-1, 8-4-2, 8-5-3a(1)]

8.4.3 SITUATION: With fourth and 5 from B's 18, K1's field-goal attempt is successful. B1 roughs the kicker/holder. **RULING:** K may accept the result of the play (3 points) and have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot, or accept the penalty. If the penalty is accepted and K retains possession, it will be first and goal from R's 9-yard line. (9-4-5, 10-5-1f)

FORCE, NEW FORCE, SAFETY, TOUCHBACK, TOUCHDOWN

8.5.1 SITUATION A: R1 returns the second half kickoff to K's 10 and fumbles: (a) the ball rolls into K's end zone; or (b) K1 attempts to recover and forces the ball into his own end zone. In both cases, the ball is in K's end zone and no player of either team attempts to recover. The referee, after waiting a few seconds, sounds his whistle. **RULING:** It is a touchdown for R both in (a) and (b) as the fumbling team retains possession. (8-2-1c, 8-5-2b)

8.5.1 SITUATION B: It is first down and 10 on A's 12. A fumble by A1 is still rolling slowly on A's 4-yard line. During an attempt to recover the ball, A2 pushes B1 into the ball causing the ball to roll across the goal line where it is recovered by: (a) A3 who is downed there; or (b) A4 who advances to A's 15; or (c) B2 who is downed immediately. **RULING:** Safety in (a). In (b), it is A's ball on the 15 and the next down is second and 7. In (c), it is a touchdown. (2-13-1, 7-4-2, 8-5-2b)

8.5.1 SITUATION C: A scrimmage kick by K1 from his own end zone is muffed in flight beyond the neutral zone by R1 and rebounds into the end zone where it is recovered by K2. The ball becomes dead in the end zone when K2 is tackled there. **RULING:** This is a safety because the force which put the ball into the end

zone was still the kick by K1. R will be awarded 2 points and K will free kick from K's 20-yard line. (8-5-2b)

8.5.1 SITUATION D: It is first down and 10 on A's 3. Runner A1 fumbles on his 2-yard line. B1 intentionally kicks the loose ball which is: (a) on A's 2; or (b) in the end zone. The ball then goes out of bounds behind the goal line. **RULING:** Undoubtedly, Team A will decline the penalty in (a) and take the touchback. A will accept the penalty in (b), because declining it would give B a safety. (8-5-2b, 8-5-3c, 9-7-1)

8.5.1 SITUATION E: A1's forward pass is intercepted in B's end zone by B1 who attempts to advance, but is downed there. B2 clips at B's 3: (a) during B1's run, or (b) after B1 is downed. **RULING:** It is a touchback in both (a) and (b) and the basic spot is the succeeding spot. In (a), it is first and 10 for B from B's 1½-yard line. In (b), the dead-ball foul will be penalized from B's 20 resulting in first and 10 from B's 10-yard line. (8-5-3d, 10-4-5d)

8.5.2 SITUATION A: R1 makes an over-the-shoulder catch of a scrimmage kick on his own 2-yard line, running full speed in the direction of his own goal line. His momentum carries him into the end zone with the ball. **RULING:** Since the momentum of R1 carried him into his own end zone, if the ball becomes dead in his possession in the end zone, it will be R's ball at the spot of the catch. This also would be true if the ball went out of bounds behind the goal line after R1's momentum carried him there and he was last in possession of the ball. (8-5-2a EXCEPTION)

8.5.2 SITUATION B: With fourth and 3 from his own 10-yard line, the scrimmage kick by K1 is blocked so that it rebounds into K's end zone and: (a) is muffed out of bounds in the end zone by either K or R; or (b) is simultaneously recovered in the end zone by K2 and R1. **RULING:** In (a), it is a safety. R will be awarded 2 points and K will put the ball in play by a free kick from its 20-yard line. It is a touchdown for R in (b). (2-36-2, 8-2-1b, 8-5-1, 8-5-2b)

8.5.2 SITUATION C: K1's punt is blocked on K's 5-yard line and the ball is slowly rolling near the goal line. R1 attempts to recover and just barely touches the ball. The ball then rolls into the end zone where K2 falls on it. **RULING:** The covering official will have to judge whether or not a new force resulted from R1's touch. The covering official must decide whether the original force was such that the ball could have gone into the end zone regardless of the muff. If the covering official has doubt, he will rule that the force was supplied by the kick, thus resulting in a safety. If the covering official rules R1 supplied the force, it is a touchback. (8-5-2b)

8.5.2 SITUATION D: Fourth and 15 for A from its own 8-yard line. A1 is in punt formation and receives the snap in his end zone, but fumbles the ball. A1 quickly recovers and throws a forward pass to ineligible A2, who is also in the end zone. A2 muffs the ball and it falls incomplete. **RULING:** If B accepts the penalty for A2's illegal touching, it results in a safety. If B declines the penalty for the foul by A2, the result is B's ball first and goal from A's 8-yard line. (5-1-3c, 7-5-13 PENALTY, 8-5-2c, 10-5-6)

8.5.2 SITUATION E: B1 intercepts a pass on B's 4-yard line with his momentum taking him directly toward his goal line: (a) B1 fumbles on the 1-yard line, or (b) B1 is contacted by A2 and the ball comes loose on the 2-yard line. In both cases B2 recovers the ball in B's end zone and is downed there. **RULING:** It is a safety in both (a) and (b). Once B1 gained possession in the field of play, he is responsible for the fumble which is the force which put the ball into the end zone. Had B1 not fumbled, the momentum exception would have been in effect.

8.5.2 SITUATION F: B1 intercepts on his own 4-yard line and his momentum takes him into B's end zone. (a) B1 advances out of the end zone and runs to his own 35-yard line; or (b) B1 runs out of the end zone then circles back into it and is downed there; or (c) B1 is hit and fumbles and A1 falls on the loose ball in the end zone; or (d) B2 holds A1 in the end zone as B1 is downed there. **RULING:** Legal advance in (a). In (b), it is a safety. Once B1 advances out of the end zone as in (a) or (b), the exception is canceled and action thereafter dictates the result of the play. Touchdown for A in (c). In (d), the foul by B2 occurred in the end zone behind the basic spot resulting in a safety. (7-5-4, 8-2-1, 8-5-2a EXCEPTION, 10-4-3, 10-6)

8.5.2 SITUATION G: B1, while in full stride at B's 2-yard line (a) intercepts a backward pass; (b) intercepts a fumble; or (c) recovers a grounded fumble or backward pass and his momentum carries him into his end zone where he is downed. **RULING:** In (a),(b) and (c) the ball would belong to B at the spot where the backward pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered as the momentum exception applies.

8.5.2 SITUATION H: R1, while in full stride at his 2-yard line (a) catches a punt over his shoulder; or (b) recovers a grounded punt. His momentum carries him into his end zone where he is downed. **RULING:** In (a) and (b) the ball would belong to R at the spot where the punt was caught or recovered as the momentum exception applies.

8.5.3 SITUATION A: With fourth down and 7 from K's 10, K1 punts from the end zone. The kick is partially blocked and is just barely moving at K's 2-yard line when R1's muff provides a new force which moves the ball into, and out of, the end zone. **RULING:** Touchback. Because it was the new force by R1 which caused the ball to go out of K's end zone, the result is a touchback instead of a safety. (2-13-1, 8-5-3b)

8.5.3 SITUATION B: K1 kicks off to start the second half. The ball is rolling on R's 7-yard line when R1: (a) accidentally, or (b) intentionally kicks the ball into his own end zone where R2 recovers. Is the kick by R1 in either (a) or (b) a new force? If the action is a foul, where is it penalized from? **RULING:** It is not a new force in either (a) or (b), as force is not a consideration on kicks going into R's end zone. Even though the ball was kicked by R1, the kick had not ended. The contact in (a) is ignored, because it was not an intentional act. In (b), the kick is illegal, and if the penalty is accepted, it is enforced from the previous spot. If the penalty is declined, it is a touchback by rule. In both (a) and (b), the ball becomes dead when the kick breaks the plane of R's goal line. (2-13-4, 9-7-1, 10-6)

8.5.3 SITUATION C: B1 intercepts a forward pass in his end zone and then passes backward to B2 who: (a) muffs the ball so that it goes out of bounds across the sideline behind the goal line; or (b) bats the ball over the end line.

RULING: In both (a) and (b), the force which put the ball into the end zone was the pass by A1. When B2 muffed the backward pass out of bounds in the end zone or batted the backward pass in flight so that it went over the end line, the result is a touchback. It will be first and 10 for B from its 20-yard line. (8-5-3c, 9-7-2)

8.5.3 SITUATION D: A1 is running on an attempted two-point conversion. Immediately prior to reaching the goal line, B1 contacts A1, who fumbles the ball forward into B's end zone and the ball touches the ground and continues to roll. In order to prevent recovery, B2 bats/kicks the ball over the end line. **RULING:** B has committed a foul for illegal kicking or batting. The result of the play is a touchback as A1's fumble is the force that put the ball into the end zone. The end of the run is where player possession was lost by A1. If A accepts the batting/kicking foul, it is enforced from the spot where possession was lost and A will replay the try.

Rule **9** Conduct of Players and Others

ASSISTING RUNNER

9.1 SITUATION: With fourth and goal from B's 1-yard line, runner A1 is pushed at the line of scrimmage from behind by A2 in an effort by A2 to get him into the end zone. **RULING:** A2 has fouled by helping the runner. The foul carries a 5-yard penalty. Therefore it will be fourth and goal from B's 6-yard line if the penalty is accepted.

BLOCKING – ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS

9.2.1 SITUATION A: During a running play, blocker A1 has his hands cupped and together in front of his body with his elbows outside his shoulders. As he approaches his opponent, he raises his hands and forearms perpendicular to the ground to contact his opponent. **RULING:** If the blocker's palms are facing the opponent, or if his forearms are extended more than 45 degrees from his body, the hands must be open at and during contact. (2-3-2)

9.2.1 SITUATION B: Blocker A1 has his hands and arms in legal position with the elbows outside the body and: (a) when B1 attempts to penetrate his block in an upright position, he contacts B1 above the shoulders with his forearm; or (b) as B2 ducks or submarines, A1 contacts him above the shoulder with his cupped hands. **RULING:** In (a), it is an illegal blocking technique because contact was made above the defensive player's shoulders while he was in a normal upright position. In (b), the responsibility for the contact on the head of B2 is that of B2, because he has

taken evasive action to avoid the block. It is assumed contact by A1 in (b) does not violate the provision of striking or contacting above the shoulders. (2-3-2)

9.2.1 SITUATION C: During a scrimmage down, blocker A1 contacts B1 with open hands: (a) while his forearms are extended more than 45 degrees from his body and the palms of his hands are toward the defender; or (b) in a pushing action when extending his arms beyond 45 degrees from his body. **RULING:** It is a legal blocking technique in both (a) or (b). (2-3-2)

9.2.1 SITUATION D: Lineman A1 and B1 are both inside the free-blocking zone at the snap. Before the zone disintegrates, A1 blocks B1 with open hands from behind pushing B1 with his arms fully extended. **RULING:** Legal block. (2-17-3)

9.2.1 SITUATION E: In blocking B1, A1's forearms are almost fully extended from his body and he contacts B1 with the side of his closed hands. The palms of A1's hands are not directly facing B1. **RULING:** An illegal blocking technique by A1. The hands may not be closed or cupped when the arms are extended more than 45 degrees from the blocker's body. (2-3-2)

9.2.1 SITUATION F: A1 is blocking with open hands: (a) outside his own frame; or (b) outside B1's frame, during contact. **RULING:** A1 is using an illegal blocking technique in both (a) and (b). When the hands are outside the frame, as described above and grasps the opponent or his equipment, it is a holding foul instead of illegal use of hands.

9.2.1 SITUATION G: A1 makes legal contact on B1's chest using extended arms with open hands. B1 spins in an effort to evade A1 and get to the passer. A1 effectively maintains contact while shifting his hands to B1's upper arm and then directly on his back as B1 turns. A1 continues the contact and finishes the block by forcing B1 beyond the passer. **RULING:** The described blocking technique is legal. **COMMENT:** In order to legally contact the back of the opponent in this situation it must either be a continuation of contact that was legal originally, or because the opponent turned so quickly the blocker could not stop his charge in time to avoid contact on the back. When the extended-arms technique is used, the hands must be open on contact and remain open during the contact. The open-hand blocking technique may be used in any situation where blocking is legal for A.

USE OF HANDS ON MUFFED PASS

9.2.1 SITUATION H: A1 throws a forward pass beyond the neutral zone which is touched by eligible A2 and is muffed high into the air. While the muffed ball is in the air: (a) ineligible A3 blocks B1 away from the ball, or (b) ineligible A3 touches the ball in an attempt to catch it. **RULING:** Legal action in (a), but illegal touching in (b). After A2 touches the ball, eligible offensive team players may use hands or arms. Pass interference restrictions for eligibles have ended. However, an ineligible Team A player may not touch the pass until after a Team B player has touched it. The ineligibles, however, may block an opponent to keep him from getting to the ball or to help a teammate secure possession. (2-3-4c, 7-5-9b, 7-5-13)

INTERLOCKED BLOCKING

9.2.1 SITUATION I: K is attempting a try by kick. After the ball is snapped, the offensive guards and tackles each grab the jersey of an adjacent teammate. The kick by K1 is successful. **RULING:** Grabbing the jersey of an offensive teammate is considered to be the same as grasping the teammate and it is interlocked blocking, which is a form of illegal use of hands and carries a 10-yard penalty. Any time offensive players grasp teammates in this manner, it would have to be considered interlocked blocking whether they grab each other at the shoulders, arms, legs, ankles, etc.

9.2.1 SITUATION J: On a successful try for point by kick, the interior linemen of K all reached across and grasped the teammate immediately to their inside after the snap. **RULING:** Interlocked blocking, 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul since this spot is probably behind the basic spot.

BLOCKING – USE OF HANDS

9.2.3 SITUATION A: End A1 sprints from the line and then cuts sharply toward the middle of the field. A1 makes no attempt to block defensive back B1. B1 pursues A1 and pushes him from the side using his open hands. Contact is made on A1's upper arm before the pass is thrown. A1 was moving away from B1 when the contact occurred. **RULING:** Illegal use of hands by B1. A defender may legally contact an eligible receiver beyond the neutral zone before the pass is in flight provided the receiver is a potential blocker. The contact may be a block or warding off the opponent who is attempting to block by pushing or pulling him. However, if the receiver is not attempting to block or has gone past the yard line occupied by the defender or is moving away, it is illegal for the defender to use hands in the manner described. In this situation, it is clear that A1 is no longer a potential blocker on B1. (2-3-5a, 7-5-7)

9.2.3 SITUATION B: As the offensive linemen charge on the snap of the ball, B1: (a) grasps guard A1 by the jersey and controls him until he sees where the ball is going; or (b) slaps A1 on the side of the helmet with an open hand and forces his head to the side with what is commonly called the "bell ringer;" or (c) contacts A1 with one hand on his shoulder pad and the other hand on his helmet in fighting off the block; or (d) pulls A1's shoulders to one side and charges through in an effort to get to the runner; or (e) pulls A1's shoulders to one side so B2 may charge through to the runner. **RULING:** It is holding in (a), which will result in a 10-yard penalty administered in accordance with the all-but-one principle, if accepted. In (b), it is illegal personal contact, and (e), it is illegal use of hands by B1, which also carries a 10-yard penalty. The action by B1 in (c) and (d) is legal.

9.2.3 SITUATION C: Quarterback A1 drops back 15 yards and throws a legal forward pass intended for A2, who is 5 yards behind the neutral zone. Before the pass reaches A2: (a) B1 tackles A2; or (b) B1 blocks A2. **RULING:** In (a), tackling A2 is a foul, as it is a form of holding. Defensive players are prohibited from

grasping an opponent other than the runner. The foul in (a) occurs during a loose-ball play, and the 10-yard penalty will be administered from the previous spot. In (b), the contact by B1 is not pass interference and, if the block itself is legal, there is no infraction. (7-5-10)

ILLEGAL BLOCKING

9.3.2 SITUATION A: A1 is legally in motion at the snap: (a) within the free-blocking zone, or (b) outside the free-blocking zone, and B1 is in the zone at the snap. In (a), A1 blocks B1 below the waist as a part of immediate, initial action following the snap, within the free-blocking zone. In (b), A1 comes into the free-blocking zone and blocks B1 above the waist and in the back as a part of an immediate, initial action following the snap. **RULING:** It is an illegal block in both (a) and (b). In (a), because A1 and B1 were both not on the line of scrimmage but were in the zone at the snap, the block below the waist is illegal even if initiated as part of immediate, initial action following the snap. The offensive blocker must be on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap and the block must be an immediate, initial action at the snap to be able to legally block below the waist. In (b) the block is illegal as it is blocking in the back. (2-17-2, 2-17-3, 9-3-5 PENALTY)

9.3.2 SITUATION B: At the snap, A1, B1 and B2 were all on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone at the snap and A2 is in shotgun formation lined up outside the zone. After the snap: (a) A1 blocks B1 then disengages and blocks B2 below the waist before the ball has left the zone; (b) B1 is in a gap and A1 has to take a step to get to him before initiating contact below the waist but is continually moving toward B1 after the snap; (c) A1 makes initial contact with B1 with the player's hands below the waist, the continuation of the block resulting in A1's hands above or below B1's waist; (d) A1 rises and slightly retreats as if to go in traditional pass blocking protection, but then dives and blocks B1 below the waist. **RULING:** In (a), this is an illegal block below the waist as the block was not a part of the immediate, initial action following the snap. In (b) and (c), the block is legal as it meets all of the criteria for a legal block below the waist provided the block was a part of the immediate, initial action following the snap. The location of A2 is not a factor in determining the legality of the block below the waist if the players are linemen, in the zone at the snap, and the block is initiated as part of immediate, initial action following the snap. In (d), due to the 2021 change in the rules, game officials should be aware of the start of the block and know that the start may or may not precede actual contact. In (d), this is an illegal block below the waist as the block was not part of the immediate, initial action following the snap. (2-17-2)

9.3.2 SITUATION C: Back A9 is lined up behind quarterback A8 within the free-blocking zone. As A8 drops back to pass, A9 blocks B7, who was in the free-blocking zone at the snap, below the waist. **RULING:** Illegal block by A9. An offensive player must be on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone at the snap in order to block a defensive player below the waist who was also on

the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone at the snap, even if initiated as part of immediate, initial action following the snap. (2-17-2)

9.3.2 SITUATION D: Linebacker B7 is in the free-blocking zone, but off the line of scrimmage. B7 blocks A8 below the waist while the ball is still in the zone.

RULING: Illegal block. In order for a block below the waist to be legal, both the blocker and the person being blocked must be on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone, even if initiated as part of immediate, initial action following the snap. (2-17-2)

9.3.2 SITUATION E: During a running play to the left, lineman A1, who was in the free-blocking zone, crosses through the zone and blocks B1 who was in the zone at the snap from the side below the waist, and away from the spot of the snap, as the lead blocker for a reverse. **RULING:** Illegal block by A1 because the block was below the waist and not part of the immediate, initial action following the snap. (2-17-2)

9.3.2 SITUATION F: A1 and A2 combine in blocking B1 as follows: (a) both block B1 downfield with A1 making contact above the waist and A2 simultaneously making contact below the waist but above the knees; or (b) both block B1 in the free-blocking zone with A1's block above the waist and A2's block below the waist; or (c) A1 blocks B1 above the waist as part of immediate, initial action following the snap and at the same time, A2 blocks B1 below the waist and above the knees; or (d) both A1 and A2 block B1 below the knees from the front of B1 while in the free-blocking zone. **RULING:** Illegal block below the waist by A2 in (a) since the block is not in the free-blocking zone even if part of the immediate, initial action following the snap; in (b) illegal chop block by A2; in (c) the block by A2 is legal if both blockers were on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone at the snap and the block was part of the immediate, initial action following the snap; in (d) this combination or multiple block is legal if the block and both blockers were in the free-blocking zone at the snap and the block was part of the immediate, initial action following the snap. (2-17-2, 9-3-6)

9.3.2 SITUATION G: A sets in a formation with the split end A1 outside the defensive end and outside the linebacker, and not in the free-blocking zone. Following the snap, A1 blocks toward the ball on either B1, the defensive end, or B2, the linebacker, who is 2 yards behind the neutral zone. A1 blocks: (a) B1 above the waist from the front; or (b) B2 below the waist from the front; or (c) B1 with his hands on the side of B1's shoulder pads. **RULING:** Legal block in (a) and (c), but an illegal block below the waist in (b). A1 may block this player, but the block must be above the waist and on the front or side of the opponent. (2-17-2)

9.3.2 SITUATION H: A1 is the lead blocker on a sweep play and is outside the free-blocking zone when he blocks B1: (a) and initial contact is below B1's waist but the block was not part of the immediate, initial action following the snap; or (b) as A1 moves in to block, initial contact is with B1's hands that are below the waist and, thereafter, contact is at B's knees; or (c) initial contact on B1 is at waist

level, but as he continues contact he does block on B1's legs. **RULING:** Illegal block below the waist in (a) and (b) and legal contact in (c). If the initial contact is with the opponent's body, hands or arms, at the waist or above, and in continuation the contact is below the waist, it is a legal block. (2-3-7)

9.3.2 SITUATION I: R1 rushes in to block a punt by K1. K2 attempts to block R1. The direction of K2's block is above the waist; however, just before contact R1 jumps in the air attempting to block the punt and contact by K2 is below R1's waist. **RULING:** K2's block is legal since the initial direction was legal and the below-the-waist contact was as a result of R1's movement. When R1 jumped in the air, it absolved K2 of responsibility for the low block. This would not be true if R1 changed direction laterally; in that case initial blocking contact must be above the opponent's waist. (2-3-7)

9.3.2 SITUATION J: A1 contacts B1 with a legal block above the waist. The contact causes both players to stop or to bounce backward slightly and: (a) A1 immediately continues his charge and blocks B1 below the waist; or (b) A1 retreats or recoils and then blocks B1 below the waist. **RULING:** Legal block in (a). It is permissible for A1's block to be below the waist if it is part of a continuous block or continuous charge after first contact was above the waist. It is an illegal block in (b). It is illegal for A1 to recoil, retreat or reset after first contact with B1 above the waist and then block him below the waist. It is considered a second block in this case and therefore an illegal block below the waist.

9.3.4 SITUATION: From his 40-yard line, K1 kicks the ball laterally and short on a kickoff, hoping his team can recover just beyond R's free-kick line. The ball bounces immediately after being kicked. K1 is blocked by R1: (a) on his 42-yard line; or (b) on his 43-yard line, 5 yards from the sideline. **RULING:** Legal block in both (a) and (b) if the contact is above the waist. As soon as the ball touches the ground, the kicker/holder may be contacted with a legal block.

9.3.5 SITUATION A: Offensive lineman A1 is on his scrimmage line and in the free-blocking zone at the snap. Immediately after the snap he drops back one step, then moves quickly three steps to the inside and while still in the free-blocking zone, contacts B1 in the back. The free-blocking zone still exists prior to A1's block. B1 was in the free-blocking zone at the snap. **RULING:** Legal block by A1. Blocking in the back does not have to be an immediate, initial action following the snap.

9.3.5 SITUATION B: Quarterback A1 takes the snap and hands off to back A2 who takes a few steps left and then hands off to back A3 who attempts to run wide to the right. Linemen A4 and A5 pull and block opponents from behind in the back while the ball is still in the zone. The defenders and linemen were in the zone at the snap and the contact occurred in the free-blocking zone while the free-blocking zone still exists. **RULING:** Legal contact.

9.3.5 SITUATION C: A9 is approaching B10 in the open field and at an angle. A9 pushes B10 in the back with one hand and with the other hand on the shoulder. **RULING:** This is an illegal block in the back. (9-3-5)

9.3.5 SITUATION D: A2 is on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone at the snap. A2 pulls down the line and contacts B7 (who was in the free-blocking zone at the snap) inside the shoulders, below the neck, above the waist and in the back while B7 and the ball are still in the free-blocking zone. **RULING:** Legal block by A2. Blocking in the back does not have to be an immediate, initial action following the snap.

9.3.5 SITUATION E: Runner A1 is hit behind the line. The ball pops free and: (a) is in the air; or (b) is rolling on the ground, when B1 pushes A2 in the back above the waist to get to the loose ball. **RULING:** Legal in both (a) and (b). (2-3-4c, 2-3-5b)

9.3.5 SITUATION F: Runner A1 breaks free beyond the neutral zone at midfield. A2 is running between A1 and safety B1, who is gaining fast on both of them. As B1 nears A2 he pushes him from behind above the waist to clear the way to A1. B1 subsequently tackles A1 at B's 10-yard line. **RULING:** B1's contact on blocker A2 is legal when attempting to get to the runner or to catch or recover a loose ball which he may possess. (2-3-5b)

9.3.6 COMMENT: Clipping is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is from behind, at or below the waist, and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner. Such cases shall not be ruled clipping and/or blocking in the back unless the game official sees the initial contact. When in doubt, the contact is legal and not from behind. When the contact is ruled to be from behind, and the game official has questions as to the initial point of contact, it shall be ruled clipping.

9.3.6 SITUATION A: A1 is on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone at the snap. Immediately following the snap, he drops back one step, moves three steps inside and while still in the free-blocking zone, clips B2 who was on the line of scrimmage, in the free-blocking zone at the snap and the ball had not left the free-blocking zone. **RULING:** Illegal block (clipping).

9.3.6 SITUATION B: Linebacker B1 is lined up three yards from the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone. A2, who is on the line of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone, when the ball is snapped, blocks (a) B1 below the waist, from behind or (b) B1 in the back, above the waist. In both situations, the contact is in the zone and the ball is in the zone when the contact occurs. **RULING:** In (a), it is clipping and a 15-yard penalty would be assessed from the basic spot. In (b), legal.

9.3.7 SITUATION A: During a free kick (including an onside kick attempt), K1 initiates contact against R1 prior to the ball traveling past the receiving team's restraining line (10 yards). No member of R had initiated a block against K in the neutral zone. **RULING:** Live ball foul, illegal block. If the distance penalty is accepted, it is R's choice to have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or to have it enforced from the previous spot and require K to rekick. (10-4-2 EXCEPTION)

9.3.7 SITUATION B: During a free kick (including an onside kick attempt): (a) R touches the ball prior to it traveling 10 yards after which K contacts R and recovers the ball; (b) after the ball travels 10 yards, K contacts R prior to R touching

the ball and is recovered by K; (c) after the ball touches the ground and travels 10 yards, K contacts R prior to recovering the ball; (d) after the ball travels 10 yards and after R initiates a block against K in the neutral zone, K recovers the ball; or (e) R and K contact each other approximately the same time prior to the ball traveling 10 yards. **RULING:** Legal recovery by K in (a), (b), (c) and (d). In (e), game officials should be guided by the thought that when in doubt, R initiated the contact and, therefore, this would be no foul.

FIGHTING/NOT FIGHTING

9.4.1 SITUATION A: With the ball on B's 2-yard line and between downs, a fight starts between A1 and B1. The game officials do not know which player struck the first blow. **RULING:** Disqualify both A1 and B1 and signal personal fouls against each team, but the penalties cancel. (2-11; 10-2-5b, c)

9.4.1 SITUATION B: It is A's ball, third down and 1, on A's 10-yard line. B1 tackles A1 with a hard legal tackle at the line of scrimmage. A1, feeling the tackle was unjustly harsh, jumps to his feet and attacks B1, delivering blows with his fist. In response, B1 directs a profanity toward A1. **RULING:** The penalties for A1's dead-ball personal foul and B1's unsportsmanlike conduct foul would cancel. A1 shall be disqualified for fighting; B1 would remain in the game unless the game officials judged that his reaction was flagrant or it was his second unsportsmanlike conduct foul. It's A's ball fourth down and 1 on its own 10-yard line. (2-11; 9-8-1 PENALTY; 10-2-5b, c)

9.4.1 SITUATION C: During B1's tackling of runner A1, he delivers a blow toward the ball in an attempt to dislodge it, but instead strikes A1 with his fist. **RULING:** B1 is charged with a personal foul and disqualified for fighting. B will be assessed a 15-yard penalty. **COMMENT:** This specific situation is intended to depict an act which is clearly a personal foul and not inadvertent contact resulting from an attempt to dislodge the football. Game officials must continually use prudent judgment and see the entire play in order to view these types of acts in the proper context. If it is judged by the game official that this contact is excessive, but is not an act to be construed as fighting, the personal foul would result in an ejection for striking, but would not be fighting by rule. (2-11)

9.4.1 SITUATION D: After completing the catch, receiver A12's momentum carries him into B's team box, where nonplayer B44 pushes A12 into a bench. **RULING:** Nonplayer B44 is disqualified and a 15-yard penalty is assessed from the succeeding spot.

ILLEGAL PERSONAL CONTACT

9.4.3 COMMENT: Is there guidance for game officials and coaches as to the application of 9-4-3(g) and what contact should be considered excessive, particularly against defenseless players? Yes. While there is not universal agreement on a specific list of items, several have been identified as problematic and particular

emphasis should be made on these acts, in addition to a general emphasis on the protection of defenseless players, particularly receivers. Any play with a player executing forceful contact against a defenseless receiver (as defined in 2-32-16b and 2-32-16c) that is not incidental as a result of playing the ball, initiated with the open hand or a wrap-up tackle should be carefully considered by the game official as a possible excessive act.

9.4.3 SITUATION A: As A1 is advancing for a touchdown from B's 10-yard line, B1 commits a block with open hands against A2 who is obviously out of the play at B's 15-yard line. The covering official rules that not only was the contact unnecessarily rough, it was judged by the game official to be flagrant. **RULING:** The penalty for the foul may be enforced from the succeeding spot or the succeeding kickoff and A's touchdown stands. B1 is disqualified because the foul was judged by the game official to be flagrant. **COMMENT:** Game officials must be alert for flagrant fouls and enforce the disqualification portion of the penalty if necessary. (9-4-3g PENALTY, 10-5-1)

9.4.3 SITUATION B: Wide receiver A1 goes downfield 15 yards, cuts sharply to the outside and stops near the sideline and catches the pass. B1 drives the crown (top portion) of his helmet into A1. **RULING:** This use of the helmet is spearing by B1. **COMMENT:** Face tackling, butt blocking and spearing are somewhat related fouls. All are illegal and each carries a 15-yard penalty. Butt blocking is initiating contact with front of the helmet against an opponent who is not the runner. It may be committed by any player. Face tackling is the same act against the runner and can only be committed by the defense. Both fouls may result from inadvertent acts. Spearing is initiating contact at the shoulders or below against an opponent with the crown (top portion) of the helmet and may be committed by any player. Any tactic which involves the illegal use of the helmet is condemned by all who are concerned with the well-being of players and the perpetuation of the game. (2-20-1c)

9.4.3 SITUATION C: Quarterback A1 has: (a) handed off to A2 and is walking away observing the progress of the play; or (b) thrown a legal forward pass and is moving away from the play after the pass was caught. In (a) and (b), B1 tackles A1. **RULING:** Illegal personal contact by B1 in both (a) and (b). It is a foul for illegal personal contact when a player charges into or throws an opponent to the ground after he is obviously out of the play. The 15-yard penalty is administered in accordance with the all-but-one principle. If the act is judged by the game official to be flagrant, B1 must be disqualified. (2-40)

9.4.3 SITUATION D: Runner A1 breaks free beyond the neutral zone. (a) As B1 and B2 are closing in to tackle him, A1 veers into B1 and deliberately drives the crown (top portion) of his helmet into B1's chest; or (b) as B1 and B2 attempt to bring him down, A1 lowers his head and drives forward for yardage and he contacts B1 and/or B2 with his helmet. **RULING:** Spearing by A1 in (a) as he uses the crown (top portion) of his helmet to punish B1. It is a 15-yard penalty. If the spearing is judged by the game official to be flagrant, A1 must be disqualified. In

(b), the lowering of the head to pick up additional yardage is not illegal unless it is done to punish an opponent, if he uses his helmet to butt or ram, or the runner commits spearing or butt blocking or targeting. The runner's normal reaction is to attempt to gain yardage when being tackled. The reason for including the runner in the illegal helmet contact and targeting prohibition is to prevent him from using his helmet to abuse an opponent as well as protection of the player. The illegal helmet contact rules apply equally to all players. (2-20-1, 2-20-2)

ADVANTAGE GAINED ILLEGALLY

9.4.3 SITUATION E: (a) End A1 goes 5 yards downfield and stops. Wide receiver A2 jumps on his back and catches a pass; or (b) B1 steps on the back of snapper A1 immediately after the snap as he propels himself into the air to block a punt; or (c) B1 jumps on B2's shoulders in an effort to block a field-goal attempt. **RULING:** A personal foul in (a), (b) and (c). In all cases, an advantage has been gained illegally.

OUT OF PLAY

9.4.3 SITUATION F: During a forward-pass play, eligible receiver A1 runs a pass pattern and it is obvious he will be unable to catch the pass from A2 because: (a) the pass is incomplete, striking the ground; or (b) it is well overthrown but in the general area of A1. In both (a) and (b), when it is obvious the pass will not be caught by A1, B1 aggressively contacts A1. **RULING:** In (a), because this contact is following the incomplete pass, it is a dead-ball foul and would be penalized 15 yards from the succeeding spot. In (b), because the pass was still in flight when B1 contacted A1, it was pass interference even though it is obvious the pass was overthrown. The penalty is 15 yards from the previous spot. If the pass had been touched by a teammate of A1, prior to the contact by B1, the result would be a personal foul by B1, because A1 was obviously out of the play. (7-5-10a)

FACE MASK OR TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTOR

9.4.3 SITUATION G: With second down and five yards to go from B's 30-yard line, A1 throws a pass to eligible A2. Following the reception, A2 inadvertently grasps B1's face mask/helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector at B's 15-yard line as B1 attempts to tackle A2 who scores a touchdown. **RULING:** If B accepts the penalty for the inadvertent grasping of the face mask/helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector by A2, the score is nullified. Following the penalty enforcement, it will be A's ball first and 10 at B's 20-yard line.

9.4.3 SITUATION H: A1 is tackled by B1 who: (a) grasps A1's face mask/helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector momentarily and lets go; (b) has his hand brush across A1's face mask; (c) pulls A1 to the ground by grasping A1's face mask/helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector. **RULING:** There is no penalty in (b). There is a five-yard penalty in (a) and a 15-yard penalty in (c).

9.4.3 SITUATION I: As B1 attempts to tackle A1 he: (a) grasps A1's face mask/helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector which turns the head of A1; or (b) grasps A1's face mask/helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector and immediately releases it without twisting, turning, or pulling. **RULING:** It is a personal foul in (a) that results in a 15-yard penalty from the end of the run. In (b) B will be assessed a 5-yard penalty from the end of the run because of the incidental face mask.

9.4.3 SITUATION J: As B5 attempts to tackle A6, he has his hand on the helmet but does not have his fingers in the face mask or inside the helmet. **RULING:** No foul as B5 did not grasp the face mask/helmet opening or attached tooth and mouth protector.

9.4.3 SITUATION K: With first and 10 from A's 5-yard line, A1 drops back into his end zone, where he is tackled by the face mask/helmet opening and fumbles. The ball rolls out of bounds at A's 3-yard line. **RULING:** The fumble by A is a loose-ball play behind the neutral zone which would be enforced from the previous spot. Following penalty administration, it will be A's ball, first and 10, at A's 20-yard line.

ILLEGAL HELMET CONTACT/CONTACT AGAINST DEFENSELESS PLAYERS

9.4.3 COMMENT: Is there rules coverage on a "defenseless player" who should be protected from unnecessary roughness? Yes, defenseless players are especially vulnerable to potential injury. Game officials must diligently observe all action and watch for contact against players who are deemed defenseless. The game official must draw distinction between contact necessary to make a legal block or tackle, including the restrictions on blindside blocks, making unnecessary contact on a defenseless player and targeting any player at any time. [2-32-16, 9-4-3i(3)]

9.4.3 SITUATION L: During a running play, A1 breaks into the secondary. Safety B1 comes up quickly and drives his face mask or helmet directly into the chest of A1. B1 simultaneously wraps his arms around A1 bringing him to the ground. **RULING:** This is a face-tackling foul by B1. (2-20)

ILLEGAL HORSE-COLLAR

9.4.3 SITUATION M: A1 is running in the open field and B1 grabs A1's shoulder pad opening from behind and: (a) pulls A1 down abruptly; (b) pulls A1 down to the ground from the side; (c) rides A1 for several yards before pulling A1 backwards to the ground; or (d) rides A1 for several yards before A1 falls forward. **RULING:** Illegal horse-collar foul in (a), (b) and (c), legal in (d).

9.4.3 SITUATION N: A1 is running in the open field and B1 grabs A1's shoulder pad opening from behind and pulls and: (a) A1 does not go down from the contact; (b) B2 comes in and tackles A1 while still in B1's grasp; or (c) A1 runs four more yards before being pulled down. **RULING:** Legal in (a) and (b); illegal horse-collar foul in (c) because runner subsequently went down because of the horse-collar foul.

9.4.3 SITUATION O: A1 is running in the free blocking zone and (a) B1 grabs A1's jersey collar opening from behind and pulls him down; (b) B1 grabs the front of A1's jersey collar opening and pulls him down; (c) B1 grabs A1's jersey at the top of the shoulder area and pulls him down. **RULING:** Illegal horse-collar foul in (a); legal in (b) and (c).

9.4.3 SITUATION P: A1 is carrying the ball when B1 grabs him by the back or side of the collar of the shoulder pads (or jersey) or grabs the jersey directly below the back collar in the name plate area. A1 then: (a) fumbles the ball and is subsequently brought to the ground by B1; (b) crosses the goal line to score a touchdown and is then brought down by B1; or (c) crosses the sideline and is then brought down by B1. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), a horse-collar foul should be called.

9.4.3 SITUATION Q: A has possession, 3rd and 10 from the A10. A25 is running in the open field and B1 uses an illegal horse collar to bring him down (a) at the 50 after he was grabbed by the collar at the A45; or (b) at the A25 after he was initially grabbed by the collar at the A30 but the runner had retreated on his own to the A25; or (c) on B's 4 yard line and A25 drags B1 into B's end zone. **RULING:** Each of these plays are running plays, so the foul is enforced from the end of the run. In (a) it will be enforced from the 50, making it first and 10 for A at the B35; in (b) the foul is enforced from the A25, making it first and 10 for A at the A40; in (c) the touchdown is scored and A has the option of enforcing the foul on the try or the subsequent kickoff.

9.4.3 SITUATION R: A has possession 4th and 8 from the B40. A1 advances 7 yards where B1 grabs him and commits an illegal horse collar foul. The jersey/collar is grabbed one yard inbounds and B1 pulls him down a) inbounds at the B33 or 2) just out of bounds with A1 crossing the sideline at the B33. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), the penalty for illegal horse collar is penalized from the end of the run and A is award a new series as the horse collar foul is to be enforced as a live ball foul, it will be first and 10 for A at the B18.

HELMET COMPLETELY OFF

9.4.3 SITUATION S: A1 is engaged with B1 in close line play. A1's helmet comes completely off as the play goes in another direction. He is beginning to put his helmet back on when B2 hits him from the side knocking him to the ground. **RULING:** B2 has committed a personal foul for contacting a player whose helmet has come completely off. However, since A1's helmet came off prior to the contact and the helmet coming off was not due to a foul by B, A1 must sit out the next play. (9-4-3l, 3-5-10d)

9.4.3 SITUATION T: B54's helmet comes completely off during an attempt to tackle A32. A32 drags B54 for a few yards, and A76, in an attempt to keep A32 from being tackled, blocks B54. **RULING:** A76 contacted a helmetless player, therefore, illegal personal contact has occurred and a personal foul shall be called. B54 must leave the field for at least one play. (3-5-10d, 9-4-3l, 9-6-4g)

9.4.3 SITUATION U: B54's helmet comes completely off during an attempt to tackle A32. After disengaging, B54 puts his helmet back on, then resumes his pursuit of runner A32. B54 is then blocked by A76. **RULING:** B54 has committed illegal participation by continuing to play after his helmet came completely off. A76 has not fouled. B54 must leave the field for at least one play. (3-5-10d, 9-4-3l, 9-6-4g)

TARGETING

9.4.3 SITUATION V: Defensive back B1 sees receiver A1 running a crossing route while A2 is taking the under route. As they near each other, B1 takes aim at A1 and: (a) makes contact to A1 above the shoulders with the shoulder pads of B1; (b) makes contact to A1 above the shoulders with the helmet of B1; (c) misses A1 but makes contact with A2 above the shoulders with the shoulder pads of B1; or (d) misses A1 but makes contact with A2 above the shoulders with the helmet of B1. **RULING:** In (a) and (c), B1 has committed a foul for targeting; in (b) and (d), B1 has committed both a targeting foul and a foul for illegal helmet contact. In (b) and (d), the targeting foul should be reported and enforced. **COMMENT:** It is critical that all game officials in a contest be aware of the actions of the players who may not be near the football. In addition to potentially being considered defenseless and needing additional protection, even those players directly involved in the play may not be targeted for contact above the shoulders. (2-20-2, 9-4-3m)

BLINDSIDE BLOCK

9.4.3 SITUATION W: A1 is in possession of the ball in the backfield running parallel to the line of scrimmage with B1 trailing attempting to make a tackle. A2 executes a blindside block with forcible contact against B1 that is not otherwise excessive or unnecessary with: (a) open hands; or (b) leading with the forearms and shoulders against B1, while: (c) inside the free-blocking zone; or (d) outside of the free-blocking zone. **RULING:** In (a), this is a legal block regardless of where the ball is located. In (b), the block would be legal if executed in (c), inside the free-blocking zone, but illegal if executed in (d), outside of the free-blocking zone. (2-3-10)

9.4.3 SITUATION X: R1 is running downfield with a punt return when R2 executes a blindside block against K1: (a) in the immediate vicinity of R1; or (b) five yards behind R1. **RULING:** In (a), the game official must determine if the block is executed with forcible contact and if so, it must be made with open hands and not viewed as excessive or unnecessary. In (b), the block must be executed with open hands and not viewed as excessive or unnecessary in order to be legal. (2-3-10)

ROUGHING THE PASSER – OR NOT

9.4.4 SITUATION A: A1 rolls out on a run-pass option. (a) A1 passes from behind the neutral zone and is subsequently contacted by B1 who could have avoided the contact, but renewed his charge after the pass; or (b) A1 is 2 yards beyond the neutral zone when he passes and B1 continues his charge and contacts him. **RULING:** It is roughing the passer in (a), but cannot be roughing the

passer in (b). However, in (b), though A1 lost his protection as a passer when he passed from beyond the neutral zone the contact could still be judged by the game official to be a personal foul.

9.4.4 SITUATION B: From A's 40-yard line, passer A1 is roughed by B1 and the pass is completed: (a) to A2 who is downed on A's 47-yard line; or (b) behind the neutral zone to A2 who is downed on A's 38; or (c) completed to A2 behind the neutral zone and his fumble at A's 35 goes directly out of bounds. **RULING:** In (a), the roughing penalty is enforced from the 47-yard line and results in a first down for A at B's 38. In (b) and (c), if the penalty is accepted, enforcement is from the previous spot resulting in a first down for A from B's 45-yard line.

9.4.4 SITUATION C: B1 is attempting to tackle the passer when: (a) B1 lunges at the passer and commits an illegal helmet contact foul by hitting the passer with his helmet; (b) B1 grasps the passer's face mask attempting to complete the tackle; or (c) as the ball is being released, B1 grabs the passer by the inside back or side collar of the shoulder pads and brings him to the ground. In (a), (b) and (c), the pass is thrown toward A2. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), an illegal personal contact foul has occurred, and roughing the passer has occurred. The referee shall ensure that the designated representative of Team A is aware of all penalty options as roughing the passer also carries an automatic first down.

ROUGHING THE KICKER/HOLDER – OR NOT

9.4.5 SITUATION A: K1 punts and R1 touches and partially blocks the kick. R2 does not touch the ball, but firmly contacts K1. **RULING:** If R1 partially blocked the kick near the kicker/holder and R2 was near the kicker/holder at the time R1 touched the ball and R2 had already started his charge at the time the kick was touched, there would be no foul as a result of the contact by R2, unless it was unnecessarily rough. **COMMENT:** The defense is responsible to avoid the kicker/holder whenever possible. In any situation, if the defense is to be excused for contacting the kicker/holder as a result of touching the kick, the ball must be touched near the spot of the kick. A defensive player may not, even after the kick has been touched, stop and then renew his charge into the kicker/holder, nor may he change his direction and charge into the kicker/holder after the ball is touched. Touching the kicked ball is, in itself, not license to charge the kicker/holder. The defensive player will not be penalized if he has made an honest endeavor to block the kick and has either succeeded, or so nearly succeeded that he touched the ball and in so doing finds himself in a position where he cannot avoid contacting the kicker/holder as a result of his effort. The rule does not specify that only the player who touches the kick is excused from contacting the kicker/holder, rather it states, "when the defense touches..." (9-4-5b)

9.4.5 SITUATION B: K1 in scrimmage-kick formation, muffs the snap, but quickly recovers and begins to run. However, K1 changes his mind and: (a) punts on the run; or (b) abruptly stops and punts. R1 is unable to stop his charge and forcibly contacts K1. R1 did not touch the kick. **RULING:** No foul in either (a) or (b)

because it was not reasonably certain K1 was going to punt the ball. **COMMENT:** It is always roughing the kicker if the contact could have been avoided regardless of whether or not it was apparent a kick would be made. Only unavoidable contact is ignored if it is not reasonably certain a kick will be made.

9.4.5 SITUATION C: R1, in an effort to block a place kick, charges through blocker K1 and without touching the ball, charges into the kicker/holder. **RULING:** The covering official must determine whether R1's charge would have taken him into the kicker/holder, regardless of the contact by the blocker. It is only when K1's block alters the course of R1's path and thus causes the contact with the kicker/holder that R1's contact is ignored and does not result in a foul.

9.4.5 SITUATION D: K11 is in scrimmage-kick formation. After the kick is away, R10 is unable to stop his attempt to block the kick and R10 displaces the kicker/holder. **RULING:** The referee judges the infraction to be running into the kicker/holder. The penalty, if accepted, is 5 yards from the previous spot and a replay of the down.

9.4.5 SITUATION E: K10, the place kick holder, is contacted forcibly by R9, clearly after the kick is away. **RULING:** Roughing the kicker/holder is a personal foul. The penalty would be 15 yards and an automatic first down, if accepted.

9.4.5 SITUATION F: As R2 rushes punter K11 he: (a) brushes K11 who maintains his balance; (b) bumps K11 causing him to fall backwards or (c) runs over K11 knocking him to the ground. **RULING:** In (a), no penalty; (b) running into the kicker/holder, 5-yard penalty and replay the down; (c) roughing the kicker/holder, personal foul, 15-yard penalty and an automatic first down.

9.4.5 SITUATION G: A11 is in scrimmage-kick formation. After taking the snap and attempting to kick the ball, he misjudges the distance and misses the ball. A11 is then contacted by B1 before he can regain his balance. B2 recovers the ball. **RULING:** Unless B1's contact is viewed as unnecessary roughness, there is no foul as A11 never became a kicker.

ROUGHING THE SNAPPER

9.4.6 SITUATION A: From a scrimmage-kick formation, A1 snaps the ball to up-back A2 who is 3 yards behind the line and offset from the snapper by 1 yard. A2 runs for a 10-yard gain. Immediately after the snap started, B7 charges: (a) directly into the snapper; or (b) into the gap between the snapper and the adjacent A player making simultaneous contact with both the snapper and the other Team A player. The snapper had not had the opportunity to defend himself and was displaced by B7's charge. **RULING:** In (a), B7 has roughed the snapper. If accepted, the loose ball foul is enforced with a 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and an automatic first down. There is no requirement that the ball be kicked or that a deep back receive the snap. In (b), there is no foul. The snapper's protection does not include simultaneous contact with another A player, nor does it take away the "center-guard gap" from B. The roughing prohibition is only for a direct charge into the snapper. (2-32-14)

9.4.6 SITUATION B: K is in scrimmage-kick formation on fourth and 17 from its own 20-yard line. Immediately following the snap, R1 charges directly into snapper A1. The kick is caught by R2 and he is downed on 40. **RULING:** R1 has roughed the snapper. In addition to the yardage, the penalty also includes an automatic first down. Following enforcement, it is K's ball first and 10 from its own 35-yard line.

9.4.6 SITUATION C: A is in a scrimmage-kick formation with punter A2 standing twelve yards deep and four yards to the right of the snapper. The wind is blowing very strong and will probably move the ball to the right after it is snapped. Is the snapper afforded protection in this case? **RULING:** Yes, because the punter is in position to receive the snap.

9.4.6 SITUATION D: A1 is lined up in a shotgun formation (5 yards behind the neutral zone) in position to take the snap and A4 is lined up at wingback and is 7 yards behind the neutral zone. Is this a scrimmage-kick formation? **RULING:** No. A1 would have to be 10 yards or more behind the neutral zone on fourth down, or must meet the criteria in Rule 2-14-2a, in order to have a scrimmage-kick formation.

SLAP TO HEAD

9.4.7 SITUATION A: Wide receiver A9 goes down field 10 yards and starts to block B10. B10 slaps A9 on the side of the helmet in an effort to avoid the block. **RULING:** Illegal personal contact. The 15-yard penalty is administered in accordance with the all-but-one principle. Disqualification also if the foul is judged by the game official to be flagrant.

9.4.7 SITUATION B: In an attempt to tackle the quarterback, B1 (a) contacts offensive blocker A1 with an open hand on the head or (b) strikes A1 with a closed fist. **RULING:** In (a), 15-yard penalty from the end of the run. In (b), B1 is disqualified for fighting.

9.4.7 SITUATION C: It is third and five from B's 40-yard line. On the snap, B1 slaps offensive guard A1 on the helmet. The quarterback then hands off to A2, who is tackled at B's 20-yard line. **RULING:** Illegal personal contact foul on B1. First and 10 from B's 10-yard line.

UNINTENTIONAL CONTACT

9.4.8 SITUATION A: Third and five for A on B's 30-yard line when B1 intercepts A1's pass at B's 15-yard line. B1 returns the interception along A's sideline and is downed on A's 40-yard line. During B1's run, the head linesman unintentionally runs into: (a) a cameraman between the restraining line and sideline at B's 20-yard line; (b) A's assistant coach in the restricted area at B's 45-yard line; or (c) A's head coach on the field of play at the 50-yard line. **RULING:** No foul in (a), but the game administrator must ensure the area between the playing field and the restraining line is clear of all non-authorized personnel. In (b) and (c) A's head coach is assessed a 15-yard non-player, illegal personal contact penalty at the succeeding spot. A second offense would result in a disqualification of the head coach.

9.4.8 SITUATION B: A1 throws a forward pass that is intercepted by B1 on B's 30-yard line and returned 70 yards along the B sideline for a B touchdown. During B1's run, the covering official is forced to change his course to run around an assistant team B coach who is in B's restricted area. The covering official drops his flag near B's restricted area. Later during the return, B12, a nonplayer, leaves the team box and runs alongside (yet out of bounds) B1 all the way to the goal line. B12 never enters the field of play during the down. The referee flags B12 for a nonplayer foul. **RULING:** Team B has committed two separate nonplayer fouls during this play, which cannot be combined to create a multiple foul. Team B's assistant coach has committed a violation of 9-8-3 for being in the restricted area while the ball is live while B12 has violated 9-8-1k and 9-8-3 by being outside his team box. Both fouls are administered. The first foul results in a sideline warning. The second violation is a 5-yard sideline interference foul for which the offended team may take the penalty on the try or the subsequent kickoff. (8-2-4, 9-8-1k, 9-8-3, 10-2-4, 10-2-5)

9.4.8 SITUATION C: In the first period, the assistant coach for Team A accidentally collides with the line judge while the line judge is covering a play. Team A is penalized 15 yards for illegal personal contact by a nonplayer. In the second period, the back judge is covering a play near the sideline and observes an assistant in the restricted area during the play. **RULING:** This constitutes the first warning for Team A for violation of the restricted area and is not penalized in terms of yards. The occurrences of the illegal personal contact foul and the restricted area violation are not combined for penalty enforcement purposes. (9-4-8, 9-8-1k)

9.4.8 SITUATION D: A1 is illegally in motion at the snap. The play goes to the sideline where one of B's coaches makes unintentional contact with a game official (9-4-8). **RULING:** Both fouls will be penalized, first the live-ball foul for A's illegal motion, then the 15 yards for unintentional contact in the restricted area. The 9-4-8 foul is a nonplayer foul and is therefore penalized as a dead-ball foul, even though the contact occurred during a live ball. (2-16-2f, 10-4-5c)

DISQUALIFICATION

9.5 SITUATION: During the first period, A1 is penalized 15 yards for an unsportsmanlike foul. In the third period, A1 is in the restricted area on the sideline and receives another 15-yard penalty for an unsportsmanlike foul. **RULING:** A1 is disqualified. A second unsportsmanlike foul results in disqualification. The rule requires disqualification on the second unsportsmanlike foul regardless of whether it occurs when A1 is a player or a nonplayer.

NONCONTACT UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

9.5.1 SITUATION A: In the process of scoring a touchdown, A1: (a) holds and waves the ball overhead the last 10 yards; or (b) after crossing the goal line, he momentarily raises the ball overhead, but then quickly drops it to the ground. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike conduct in (a), but no foul in (b).

9.5.1 SITUATION B: B1 intercepts A1's pass and returns it 95 yards for the go-ahead score. After entering the end zone, B1 (a) does a series of back flips, or (b) runs toward his team box, then stops and struts back and forth in front of his team's fans. **RULING:** An unsportsmanlike foul in both (a) and (b), penalized from the succeeding spot. The touchdown stands.

9.5.2 SITUATION: After A1 carries the ball into B's end zone, he: (a) throws the ball into the bleachers; or (b) kicks the ball from the field; or (c) spikes the ball to the ground with force; or (d) is knocked down by B1 clearly after the ball is dead. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike conduct foul in (a), (b) and (c), the touchdown counts and A will be penalized 15 yards on the try or on the subsequent kickoff. In (d), B1's contact foul will be penalized on the try to the 1½-yard line or on the subsequent kickoff. If judged by the game official to be flagrant, B1 could be disqualified. (9-4-2b; 9-5-2a, b, c; 10-4-4b)

ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION

9.6 COMMENT: A procedure has been adopted to provide an equitable penalty as it relates to illegal participation. The following are examples of the most common situations and rulings:

1. If there are more than 11 players in the formation at the snap, either offensively or defensively, the foul is considered as having occurred simultaneously with the snap and is illegal participation. The 15-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot. (9-6-4c)
2. If a substitute enters the field during the down and participates, it is illegal participation and enforced from the basic spot using the all-but-one principle unless post-scrimmage kick enforcement applies. The spot of the foul is where the substitute participated, not necessarily where he entered the field. (9-6-4a)
3. If a nonplayer hinders an opponent outside the field of play, it constitutes illegal participation. The spot of the foul is on the yard line directly inbounds. (9-6-3)
4. Prior to a change of possession or when there is no change of possession, a player of A or K who goes out of bounds and then comes back in during the down commits illegal participation. (9-6-1)

In addition, the following chart should help game officials distinguish the actions of various team members who enter the field during the down and participate.

| Play Situation (team member participates) | | | |
|---|--------|----------|--|
| Nonplayer enters during down | 9-6-4a | 15 yards | Basic spot (nonplayer, unless post-scrimmage kick enforcement applies) |
| Substitute enters during down | 9-6-4a | 15 yards | Basic spot |
| Player enters during down after being on field of play for previous down | 9-6-4a | 15 yards | Basic spot |
| Player who should be on field of play enters during down (11th or fewer player) | 9-6-4a | 15 yards | Basic spot |

9.6.1 SITUATION A: With third down and 20 from B's 40-yard line, A1 accidentally steps out of bounds at B's 30 while running a sideline pattern. A1 returns inbounds at the 28. Quarterback A2's forward pass is: (a) overthrown and incomplete; or (b) caught by A1 at B's 25; or (c) in flight to A1 when B1 contacts him and it falls incomplete. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), it is illegal participation by A1. In (c), A1's illegal participation and B1's pass interference result in a double foul and replay of the down. **COMMENT:** When A1 goes out of bounds voluntarily or by accident, or delays his return after being blocked out by an opponent, he commits an illegal participation foul when he returns inbounds. The spot of the foul is where he returns inbounds. (10-2-1)

9.6.1 SITUATION B: Third and 10 from B's 40-yard line. A1's forward pass is intercepted by B1 on B's 20 and returned to midfield. End A2 accidentally steps on the sideline at B's 30: (a) before, or (b) after the interception. In both cases A2 returns inbounds at B's 25, but does not make any attempt to catch the ball or tackle B1. **RULING:** In (a), it is an illegal participation foul at B's 25 because A2 returned after being out of bounds prior to the interception. No foul in (b) because A2 did not go out of bounds until after the change of possession with the interception by B1.

9.6.1 SITUATION C: With fourth and 15 on K's 30-yard line, K1 accidentally steps on the sideline while K2's punt is in the air. K1 returns inbounds at midfield: (a) before, or (b) after R1 catches the ball and makes the tackle on R's 40. **RULING:** Since K1 went out of bounds before the change of possession, it is an illegal participation foul in both (a) and (b) when he returns inbounds. In (a), if accepted, R may elect enforcement from the previous spot as the foul occurred during a loose ball play or from the succeeding spot. In (b), since the foul occurred during R1's run, the 15-yard penalty is enforced from the end of R1's run. (10-4-2 EXCEPTION)

9.6.1 SITUATION D: Fourth and 15 on K's 30-yard line. R1 enters the game as the 12th player while K1's punt is in the air. R2 catches the punt at the R35 and returns to the R42 before being tackled. **RULING:** This is an illegal participation

foul against R1. If accepted, the penalty is enforced from the post-scrimmage kick spot (R35) and results in first and 10 for R after enforcement.

9.6.1 SITUATION E: Between second and third downs, Team A's head coach sends several substitutes into the game. A11, believing that he has been replaced, leaves the field and goes directly to his team's box. Realizing that his position has not been substituted for, A11 enters the field as the ball is being snapped, runs a pass pattern, and catches the ball for a first down. **RULING:** This is illegal participation and is marked off 15 yards from the basic spot.

9.6.2 SITUATION A: Eligible receiver A1 runs beyond Team B's end line. Quarterback A2 throws a legal forward pass in A1's direction. A1 leaps and, while airborne, bats the ball to eligible teammate A3, who is in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Illegal participation on A1. Because A1 went out of bounds intentionally and influenced the play, he has gained an advantage and illegal participation.

9.6.2 SITUATION B: Linebacker B1 runs out of bounds while the ball is live. As runner A2 advances past B1, B1 reaches inbounds and tackles A2. **RULING:** Illegal participation.

9.6.2 SITUATION C: K1 free-kicks the ball toward the sideline. R1 runs to a sideline and intentionally steps out of bounds. While R1 is still out of bounds, he intentionally touches the ball as it nears the sideline. The ball is declared dead by the covering official. **RULING:** Illegal participation by R1. (4-3-1, 6-1-9)

9.6.4 SITUATION A: Several A substitutes enter the field between downs and go to the team's huddle, but one replaced player does not leave within three seconds and is not detected. However, when they break the huddle the replaced player runs toward his sideline and leaves the field just before the ball is snapped. **RULING:** An illegal participation foul if the covering official judges that A was using a replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive the opponents. If not, it is illegal substitution. **COMMENT:** It is becoming prevalent to see more than 11 players/replaced players in a team's huddle or in the defensive formation between downs. The replaced player is to leave the field within three seconds and in such a manner that it does not confuse or deceive the opponents. (3-7-1)

9.6.4 SITUATION B: Following a kickoff return, A1 and A2 enter the field while A3, A4 and A5 move toward the sideline. A5 stops within the 9-yard marks while A3 and A4 continue toward the team box. The ball is blown ready for play with A3 and A4 outside the 9-yard marks and is snapped without a huddle and the quarterback throws a forward pass to A4, who has gone downfield as a wide receiver. **RULING:** This play is illegal because a pretended substitution is used to deceive the opponents. The penalty of 15 yards for the illegal participation foul will be administered from the previous spot since the foul occurred at the snap. (9-6-4d)

9.6.4 SITUATION C: With third and 10 from B's 30-yard line, A1 runs to B's 18-yard line where he is tackled. During the down: substitute A12 comes onto the field and blocks B1. **RULING:** A12 is guilty of illegal participation. (2-16-2, 2-32, 2-41-8)

9.6.4 SITUATION D: A1 is injured and is treated on the field. A subsequently requests a time-out. During the next down, A1 runs 20 yards for the go-ahead score. Following the score, B requests a time-out so the coach may discuss A1's participation with the referee. **RULING:** A rule obviously has not been correctly applied as A1 must leave the game for at least one down following his injury. The touchdown is canceled and a penalty for illegal participation is enforced. A1 must leave the game for at least one down. (3-5-10)

9.6.4 SITUATION E: With third down and 12 yards to go from A's 45-yard line, quarterback A1 throws a pass to A2 at B's 45-yard line. Teammate A12 moves to get a better view of the play and enters the field of play at B's 40-yard line. During the run after the reception, (a) A2 collides with A12 and is thereafter tackled by B1; or (b) B1 slows to avoid A12 as A1 runs for a touchdown. **RULING:** Illegal participation in (a) and (b). The penalty of 15 yards is enforced using the "all-but-one" principle. Illegal participation occurs since substitute A12 hindered a teammate or an opponent and participated in the play. The spot of the foul is where the participation occurred, not where A12 entered the field. (2-30, 9-6-4a)

9.6.4 SITUATION F: A1 is engaged with B1 in close line play. A1's helmet comes completely off as the play goes downfield without being caused by a foul by any member of B. A1, without his helmet, pursues the play downfield and (a) does or (b) doesn't make contact with a blocker. **RULING:** Illegal participation in both (a) and (b). Once the player's helmet comes completely off, he is to cease involvement with the play. He must also be removed for the next play if the helmet coming off was not caused by an opponent's foul. (9-6-4, 3-5-10d)

9.6.4 SITUATION G: B54's helmet comes completely off during an attempt to tackle A32. Without losing contact, A32 drags B54 for a few yards before finally going down to the ground. **RULING:** Legal play by B54 because he is still engaged in the "immediate action" of attempting to tackle A32. After the play is over, B54 must leave the field for at least one play. (3-5-10d, 9-6-4g)

9.6.4 SITUATION H: B54's helmet comes completely off during an attempt to tackle A32. A32 fumbles the ball, and B54: (a) without disengaging, completes his tackle of A32 who recovers the fumble; (b) without disengaging, completes his tackle of A32, and upon contacting the ground, recovers the ball that has fallen directly below him; (c) disengages immediately from A32 and tries to recover the fumble that has rolled away from the two players; or (d) after tackling A32, then attempts to recover the fumble. **RULING:** Legal in (a). In (b), recovery is legal provided all contact was in the immediate area. In (c) and (d), it is illegal participation. In all cases, B54 must leave the field for at least one play. (3-5-10d, 9-6-4g)

ILLEGAL BATTING, KICKING AND EXCEPTION

9.7.1 SITUATION A: On a field-goal attempt, holder A2 muffs the snap and is attempting to gain possession of the ball on the ground when A1 kicks it between the uprights over the crossbar. **RULING:** An illegal kick by A1. If the penalty is

declined, the result of the play is a touchback as the illegal kick cannot score a field goal. (2-24-7)

9.7.1 SITUATION B: It is fourth and 10 for A from its own 15-yard line. A1 fakes a kick and runs beyond the neutral zone and kicks the ball at the 20. The kicked ball: (a) is caught by A2 at A's 30 and he is downed there; or (b) goes out of bounds at midfield; or (c) comes to rest on A's 45 and no player of either team will touch it, so the covering official sounds his whistle. **RULING:** The kick is illegal and the resulting loose ball is treated as a fumble. The normal kicking rules and restrictions are not in effect during an illegal kick. In (a), (b) and (c), if the penalty for the illegal kick is declined, it will be A's ball first and 10 from the yard line where the ball became dead. If the distance penalty is accepted, the penalty is enforced from the spot of the illegal kick. [2-24-9, 2-33, 4-2-2e(2), 6-2-1]

9.7.1 SITUATION C: A is in scrimmage-kick formation and the ball is snapped to A1 who is the potential punter. (a) A1 muffs the ball allowing it to hit the ground where he kicks it; or (b) A1 muffs the ball, but then picks it up and punts it. **RULING:** Illegal kicking in (a). If the distance penalty is accepted, the penalty is enforced from the spot of the illegal kick. It is a legal kick in (b). (2-24-4, 2-24-8, 2-33-1c, 10-3-1c, 10-4-2 EXCEPTION)

9.7.2 SITUATION A: With fourth and 4 from R's 40-yard line, K1 punts. The kick is bounding near R's goal line and K2, in an attempt to keep it from penetrating the plane of the goal line, bats the ball at the 2-yard line back toward his own goal line. In (a) it is recovered by R1 who advances to his 30; or (b) it is recovered by R2 who attempts to advance, but retreats and is downed in his own end zone. **RULING:** The bat by K2 is legal because it occurred beyond the neutral zone. In (a) R would obviously take the results of the play and put the ball in play first and 10 from its 30. In (b) since the result of the play is a safety, R would take the ball at the 2, which is the spot of first touching where K2 legally batted the kick. (6-2-5, 8-5-2a, 9-7-2 EXCEPTION)

9.7.2 SITUATION B: K1's punt is coming down over R's 10-yard line and: (a) R3 is in position to catch the ball; or (b) no R player is in position to catch the ball, when K2 bats the ball toward his own goal line while it is in flight, but the batted ball subsequently goes into R's end zone. **RULING:** In (a), it is a foul for kick-catching interference by K2 as well as first touching, and R may choose to take the result of the play, which is a touchback, or take an awarded fair catch at R's 25-yard line (15 yards in advance of the spot of interference after enforcement of the penalty) or the ball at the spot of first touching at the 10-yard line, or penalize K 15 yards from the previous spot and replay the down. In (b), there is no foul and the result of the play is a touchback. R will put the ball in play first and 10 from its own 20-yard line. (6-5-6 EXCEPTION, 8-5-3, 9-7-2 EXCEPTION)

9.7.3 SITUATION: A is in punt formation and the ball is snapped to A1, who turns his back to the line of scrimmage and throws a backward pass into the air. A2 comes forward and bats the ball 20 yards downfield where: (a) A3 recovers

it 5 yards beyond the line to gain; or (b) it is caught by A4 who advances for an additional 5 yards; or (c) it goes out of bounds in advance of the line to gain; or (d) B1 intercepts and returns it for an apparent touchdown. **RULING:** In (a), (b), (c) and (d), the batting by A2 is illegal. In (a), (b) and (c), it will be B's advantage to accept the distance penalty which will be administered from the spot of the foul because the batting occurred during the loose-ball play and behind the basic spot. In (d), because the foul was during a loose-ball play, before a change of possession, B may keep the touchdown by declining the penalty for A's foul. Otherwise, the penalty will be enforced from the spot of the foul and A will retain possession of the ball if B accepts the penalty. (10-5-3)

9.7.4 SITUATION: On fourth and 6 from B's 10-yard line, A1 is about to be hit short of the line to gain. While the ball is in A1's possession, either: (a) A2; or (b) B1, bats the ball forward into B's end zone where A3 recovers. **RULING:** It is an illegal bat in (a). The enforcement spot is the end of A1's run, which is where the bat occurred. In (b) the bat is legal and results in a touchdown for A. (8-2-1)

CONFERENCE: COACH – PLAYER(S)

9.8.1 SITUATION A: During the course of the game, quarterback A1 runs to the vicinity of his team-box area for the purpose of receiving instructions from his coach. No time-out is requested, there is no delay in declaring the ball ready for play, and the coach does not leave the team-box. **RULING:** This type of communication is legal. (9-8-1f NOTE)

9.8.1 SITUATION B: During a charged time-out: (a) A1 goes to the sideline to talk to his head coach. Thereafter, A2, A3 and A4 go to the sideline, but other team members remain between the 9-yard marks; or (b) while A1 is near the sideline talking to one coach, another coach of A goes between the 9-yard marks to the huddle on the field. **RULING:** Legal in (a), but an unauthorized conference in (b). In (b), only one type conference can be used during a given time-out. (2-6-2)

9.8.1 SITUATION C: During a charged time-out or a time-out for heat/humidity: (a) the coach of A confers with A1 near the sideline and in front of his team box, or (b) the coach of A goes onto the field to the team huddle. The conference continues for 30 seconds. In (a), A1 then returns to the huddle and A2 comes to the sideline to confer with the coach for the remainder of the charged time-out. In (b), the coach returns to the sideline and then A1 comes to the sideline for more instructions. **RULING:** In (a), this is a legal conference. In (b), it is an unauthorized conference as only one type of conference may be used during a single charged time-out or other time when a conference may be held. (2-6-2)

COACHES CONDUCT AND EQUIPMENT VERIFICATION

9.8.1 SITUATION D: In the first period, the coach for Team A commits an illegal contact foul by accidentally bumping a game official while the coach was out of the team box. Team A is penalized 15 yards. In the second period, the coach of

Team A is penalized 15 yards for an unsportsmanlike conduct foul for disagreeing with a foul called by one of the game officials. **RULING:** The first foul is for illegal personal contact and the second foul is for unsportsmanlike conduct. The penalties are not combined to force ejection of the head coach. (9-4-8)

9.8.1 SITUATION E: Following the second 15-yard penalty for an unsportsmanlike foul by the coach of B, the referee notifies him that he may no longer remain in the vicinity of the playing field and that he may not have any contact with his players, either direct or indirect, throughout the remainder of the game including the halftime intermission. The coach departs to the: (a) stands; or (b) press box; or (c) the team locker room. **RULING:** Illegal in (a) and (b). Legal in (c). In (c), if the coach has been disqualified in the first half and has gone to the locker room, he must leave the locker room if the team comes to the locker room. He may not have contact with the team during the halftime intermission. (9-8 PENALTY)

9.8.1 SITUATION F: In the first half, the head coach of A has been penalized: (a) 5 yards and then 15 yards for being outside the team box, but not on the field of play; or (b) 15 yards for being outside the team box and on the field of play. In the third period the coach is again in violation as in (a) and (b). What is the penalty and procedure? **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), another 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty is assessed and the coach must be disqualified since he has now committed his second 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul. The initial 5-yard penalty in (a) for sideline interference is not counted as one of the two fouls leading to disqualification. (9-8 PENALTY)

9.8.1 SITUATION G: During the game: (a) A1 is discovered to be wearing an eyeshield which is reflective, or (b) an entering substitute of B has a dark eyeshield. **RULING:** In (a), the coach of A is charged with an unsportsmanlike foul and A1 must leave the game until he is legally equipped. In (b), the substitute of B will not be allowed to become a player, and he will be ordered to leave the field and not re-enter until he is legally equipped. There is no foul in (b) because the substitute did not become a player. [1-5-3c(4)]

9.8.1 SITUATION H: During the pregame inspection, the game officials note that one of the teams is wearing jerseys that do not comply with the NFHS football jersey rule by: (a) having color on sections of the white (visitor) jersey where color is restricted; (b) having white on sections of the non-white (home) jersey where white is not permitted; or (c) other illegal markings or violations of the rule. The team is unable to change jerseys prior to the start. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), the team not in compliance is assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct foul against the head coach on the opening free kick for the team failing to wear legal equipment following verification. This is one of the two allowable unsportsmanlike fouls prior to ejection. The game officials should then report the incident to the state association for review as the state associations must ensure that this procedure is not used to circumvent the NFHS football rules. (1-5-1b)

INJURED PLAYER – CONFERENCE

9.8.1 SITUATION I: During an official's time-out for injury, may a player(s) of either team go near the sideline to communicate with the coach? **RULING:** Yes. This is a period between downs. If a coach enters the field to attend the injured player, he may not confer with players. (9-8-1f NOTE)

OUTSIDE TEAM BOX – ON FIELD

9.8.1 SITUATION J: A fight breaks out between several opposing players and: (a) two substitutes from each team come onto the field; or (b) one substitute of A enters and three enter from B's team box. **RULING:** In (a), the substitutes are disqualified and the penalties cancel. In (b), since all fouls are dead-ball fouls, the one 15-yard penalty on A will cancel one by B resulting in two 15-yard penalties on B. In both cases, those who were fighting will be disqualified. (2-11; 9-4-1; 10-1-1; 10-2-5a, b)

9.8.1 SITUATION K: A1 is discovered to have participated in a play with (a) a white unmarked towel hanging from his belt, which has a tacky substance on it, or (b) a piece of white unmarked plastic hanging from his belt. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), the material does not meet the requirements of the rule and is illegal. Since the player was in the game while illegally equipped, a 15-yard penalty is assessed to Team A head coach and the illegal equipment must be removed for A1 to continue to play. (9-8-1h)

9.8.3 SITUATION A: In the first period, Team A is warned and then later penalized 5 yards for sideline interference for having more than three coaches or for having noncoaches in the restricted area between the sideline and the team box. The same infraction occurs again in the third period and again in the fourth period. How are these situations penalized? **RULING:** The third and fourth infractions are both 15-yard penalties. Since the head coach is responsible for the team box, the fouls are all charged to the head coach. The second penalty for a 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul results in the disqualification of the head coach. **COMMENT:** The 2-yard belt becomes a restricted area when the ball becomes live. (1-2-3g)

9.8.3 SITUATION B: Team A has a player who is deaf. A's coach requests the referee to (a) permit a signer to go to the team huddle while they are on offense to relay the play-call to the deaf player, (b) permit the signer to move up and down the sideline inside the restricted area without penalty. **RULING:** Not permitted in (a) or (b).

UNFAIR ACT

9.9.1 SITUATION A: A is trailing by five points near the end of the fourth period and has no time-outs left when the play ends on B's 3. The referee does not feel there is any illegal delay in unpadding and that time will definitely expire before the ball is ready and A gets in position to snap. Quarterback A1 reaches into the pile of players and grabs the ball. He then throws the ball to midfield. **RULING:** Even if the referee imposes a 15-yard penalty for an unsportsmanlike act, A has

accomplished its goal – the game clock is stopped and it can get in position and be ready to run a play even though the game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal. This situation illustrates when it is appropriate for the referee to invoke the unfair-act rule and handle the situation in any way that the referee feels is equitable. In this specific situation the referee should wind the clock and end the game without giving A an opportunity to put the ball in play. **COMMENT:** The rule also gives the referee authority to take appropriate action whenever someone not subject to the rules hinders play. (3-4-6)

9.9.1 SITUATION B: From a field goal formation, potential kicker A1 yells, "Where's the tee?" A2 replies, "I'll go get it" and goes legally in motion toward his team's sideline. Ball is snapped to A1 who throws a touchdown pass to A2. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike conduct prior to snap. The ball should be declared dead and the foul enforced as a dead-ball foul. **COMMENT:** Football has been and always will be a game of deception and trickery involving multiple shifts, unusual formations and creative plays. However, actions or verbiage designed to confuse the defense into believing there is problem and a snap isn't imminent is beyond the scope of sportsmanship and is illegal.

9.9.4 SITUATION: Team A scores: (a) on a try where the line of scrimmage was the 3-yard line and the tee was placed at the 10-yard line, or (b) on a field goal where the line of scrimmage was B's 20-yard line and the tee was placed at B's 27-yard line. In both cases, the referee determines during the kick that the kicker was using an illegal kicking tee. **RULING:** In (a), the basic spot is the previous spot and fouls by the offense behind the basic spot are enforced from the spot of the foul, therefore the penalty will be 15 yards marked from the 10-yard line, and if accepted, will result in a replay of the try from B's 25-yard line. In (b), the basic spot is the previous spot and fouls by the offense behind the basic spot are enforced from the spot of the foul, therefore the penalty will be 15 yards marked from the 27-yard line, and if accepted, will result in a replay of the down from B's 42-yard line.

Rule 10 Enforcement of Penalties

LIVE- AND DEAD-BALL FOUL ADMINISTRATION

10.1.1 SITUATION A: Where is the ball spotted following penalty acceptance when it is snapped from the right-side hash mark and the run ends in the left-side zone and the foul is: (a) illegal motion by A1; or (b) holding by A1 in the middle of the field behind the end of the run; or (c) grasping the face mask/helmet opening by B1 in making the tackle? **RULING:** In (a), it is spotted at the right-side hash mark. In (b), it is spotted in the middle of the field since the enforcement spot was the spot of the foul. In (c), it is spotted at the left hash mark.

10.1.1 SITUATION B: B1 holds A1 during an unsuccessful try. A's designated representative wants to accept the penalty and replay of the down, but wishes to decline the distance penalty because A's kicker is more comfortable kicking from the previous distance. **RULING:** This is a legal request. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined.

10.1.3 SITUATION: With fourth and 10 at the 50-yard line, K2 illegally uses his hands at R's 45-yard line during a scrimmage kick by K1. R1 signals for a fair catch at the R30. The ball is caught by R2 who advances following the whistle. **RULING:** R may accept the distance penalty for K's illegal use of hands and have the yardage assessed from the previous spot or the succeeding spot. At this point, K is given the options related to R's foul and will likely accept the distance penalty for R's delay of game foul. (3-6-2b, 10-2-3, 10-4-2 EXCEPTION)

DOUBLE FOULS

10.2.1 SITUATION A: During a run by A1, A2 is holding B1. Thereafter, a fumble by A1 is recovered by B2 who advances for a touchdown. While the ball was loose during the fumble, B3 clipped A3. **RULING:** Double foul. Both fouls occurred before the change of team possession and the action thus constitutes a double foul. The penalties cancel and the down shall be replayed. (10-2-2)

10.2.1 SITUATION B: K1 is in an illegal position and the scrimmage kick by K2 is caught by R1. During the return by R1, there is clipping by R2 and a subsequent fumble by R1 is recovered by K3. **RULING:** Double foul. Even though there was a change of team possession during the down, the team gaining final possession had fouled before gaining possession. Both fouls occurred during the down and the result is a double foul. The penalties cancel and the down shall be replayed. (10-2-2)

10.2.1 SITUATION C: With fourth and 15 from midfield, K is called for illegal formation. R1 catches K1's punt, but is tackled by the face mask/helmet opening by K2. R2 strikes K3 prior to the end of the run. **RULING:** If R accepts the penalty for either foul by K, it is a double foul. R may decline the penalties and retain possession following enforcement of the penalty for R2's foul. In either case, R2 shall be disqualified. (9-4-3h, 10-2-3)

10.2.1 SITUATION D: Fourth and five from K's 20-yard line, K is in an illegal formation at the snap. While K1's punt is in flight, beyond the expanded neutral zone, R2 blocks K8 in the back at the 50-yard line. R4 catches the kick at R's 36-yard line and returns it for a touchdown. **RULING:** This is a post-scrimmage kick foul by R. Therefore, R may decline the penalty for K's foul and keep the ball after enforcement of the 10-yard penalty for the block in the back, or it may accept the penalty against K, thereby creating a double foul in which case the down shall be replayed. (10-2-1b)

FOULS – CHANGE OF POSSESSION DOWNS

10.2.2 SITUATION A: During a legal forward pass which crosses the neutral zone, A1 is illegally in motion at the snap. B1 intercepts and during his return, B2 clips A2. **RULING:** The illegal motion by A1 and the clipping by B2 are both live-ball fouls, but because the foul by B2 followed a change of team possession, they do not automatically constitute a double foul. The designated representative of B (last team in possession) may accept or decline the penalty for A's foul. If accepted, this creates a double foul and the down is replayed. If declined, then the penalty for B's foul is enforced if accepted by A. (10-1-3, 10-2-1b)

10.2.2 SITUATION B: A1's pass is intercepted by B1 at B's 40-yard line. During B1's return, A1 and B2 begin fighting at A's 40-yard line. B1 returns the ball to A's 2-yard line. **RULING:** The designated representative of B (last team in possession) may accept or decline the penalty for A's foul. If B accepts the penalty for A1's foul, it creates a double foul. B may retain possession by declining the penalty for A1's foul, in which case, it would be B's ball at its own 45-yard line following enforcement of B's penalty (if accepted by A). Both A1 and B2 will be disqualified for fighting. **COMMENT:** Whenever both teams foul during a change of possession down and the team in final possession gets the ball free of a foul (with "CLEAN HANDS") they have the opportunity to retain possession. The fact that their opponent's foul occurred after the change of possession has no bearing on the enforcement. However, when B, the "clean hands" team, retains possession by declining the opponent's foul, the penalty for B's foul may be enforced. (9-4-1 PENALTY, 10-2-1b)

10.2.2 SITUATION C: A leads 21-20 with three seconds remaining in the fourth period. It is A's ball fourth and 1 yard to go on A's 45-yard line. A1 muffs the snap, and A2 holds while the ball is loose. B1 recovers and advances to A's 1-yard line where he is downed. During B1's advance, B2 clips at A's 10-yard line and time expires during the down. In an effort to prevent a double foul, Team B declines the penalty for A2's foul. The designated representative of A then wishes to decline the penalty for B2's foul. **RULING:** The game is over as there is no accepted penalty on the play. (3-3-3a)

10.2.2 SITUATION D: B's coach is on the field during a forward-pass play. B1 intercepts and A1 grabs B1's face mask/helmet opening during the return. **RULING:** B's ball following enforcement of the penalty for A1's foul. The unsportsmanlike foul on the coach cannot be paired with A1's foul to create a double foul. The unsportsmanlike foul is enforced from the succeeding spot, and then the line-to-gain equipment is set. (9-8-2, 10-4-5a)

10.2.3 SITUATION: A scrimmage kick by K1 is caught by R1 who advances to K's 10. During the run by R1, there is clipping by R2 at K's 30 and K2 trips R2. **RULING:** Because there was a change of team possession during the down and R2's foul followed the change, R may decline the penalty for the tripping foul by K2 and retain possession. If R chooses to do this, it will be first and 10 for R from

K's 45-yard line. If R accepts the penalty for tripping by K2, it automatically results in a double foul and a replay of the down.

MULTIPLE FOULS

10.2.4 SITUATION: With first and 10 from A's 30, A1 advances to B's 40 where he fumbles. A2 recovers and advances to B's 10 where he is downed. While the ball was loose following A1's fumble, B1 held A1, and during the advance by A2, B2 grabbed A2's face mask/helmet opening. **RULING:** This is a multiple foul and the designated representative of A may accept either penalty or decline both and take the results of the play. If the penalty is accepted for B1's foul it will be enforced from the end of A1's run where he fumbled. It would be first and 10 from B's 30. If the penalty for B2's foul is accepted, it will be enforced from the end of A2's run. In this case it would be first and goal for A from B's 5-yard line. (10-3-3a)

10.2.5 SITUATION A: With third and 8 on B's 40, A1 advances to B's 35 where he is downed. B1 piles on and, almost immediately thereafter, A2 spears B1. **RULING:** The distance penalties for the dead fouls cancel. The down counts; it will now be fourth and 3 from B's 35. If A2's spearing is judged by the game official to be flagrant, he shall be disqualified. (9-4-3i; 10-2-5b, c)

10.2.5 SITUATION B: In a state where tie games are resolved by the 10-Yard Line Procedure, the game ends in a tie. Immediately following the final whistle, there is a fight between A1 and B1 and: (a) none of the game officials observed which player actually struck the first blow; or (b) A1 struck B1 who retaliated; or (c) B1 first struck A1 who retaliated. In (a), (b) and (c), A wins the toss and elects to go on defense first. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), A1 and B1 will be disqualified for fighting and they may not participate in the overtime. In (a), (b) and (c), the distance penalties cancel and the overtime will begin with B putting the ball in play, first and goal, from the 10-yard line. (2-11; 10-2-5b, c)

10.2.5 SITUATION C: On third and 8 from B's 45-yard line, runner A1 falls to the ground as he goes out of bounds at B's 40. B1 piles on. A2 then punches B2. The covering official indicates the fouls by both B1 and A2. The coach of B then insults the game official for calling the foul on B1. **RULING:** The distance penalties for B1's dead-ball personal foul and A2's punch cancel. The unsportsmanlike foul against the coach of B will be enforced with a 15-yard penalty, giving A a first and 10 from B's 25. A2 shall be disqualified for fighting. (9-4-1; 9-4-3c; 9-8-1c; 10-2-5b, c; 10-4-4)

10.2.5 SITUATION D: A has the ball, third and 7 from A's 20-yard line and runner A1 is driven out of bounds at the A25. Following the play, a fight breaks out involving A1, A2, B1, B2, B3 and B4. All six players are flagged for their involvement in the fight. **RULING:** The distance penalties for the two fouls against Team A, and two of the fouls against Team B cancel. The remaining two fouls against Team B are enforced separately and in order, resulting in a first and 10 for A at B's 45-yard line. A1, A2, B1, B2, B3 and B4 are disqualified for fighting. (9-4-1; 10-2-5b, c; 10-4-4)

10.2.5 SITUATION E: A has the ball, third and 6 from B's 45-yard line and runner A1 is driven out of bounds at B's 35-yard line. Following the play, a fight breaks out involving A1, A2, A3, A4, B1 and B2. All six players are flagged for their involvement in the fight. **RULING:** The distance penalties for two fouls against Team A, and the two fouls against Team B cancel. The remaining two distance penalties against Team A are enforced separately and in order. Since the live-ball action gave A a new series, the line to gain shall be established after A is penalized for the two remaining fouls. This results in a first and 10 for A at A's 35-yard line. A1, A2, A3, A4, B1 and B2 are disqualified for fighting. (5-1-2a, 9-4-1, 10-2-5b, c; 10-4-4)

10.2.5 SITUATION F: On third and 10 from B's 40-yard line, A1 runs out of bounds at B's 35-yard line. After A1 is out of bounds, B1 charges into A1, knocking him to the ground. A2 retaliates by shoving B1. B1 then swears at A2. A's coach swears at the wing official: (a) before the referee has determined the appropriate enforcement of the penalties; or (b) after the referee is giving his signals and the umpire begins marking off the enforcement. **RULING:** In (a), since penalty enforcement had not yet been determined, the penalties for A's two fouls will offset the penalties for B's two fouls, resulting in fourth and 5 from B's 35-yard line. In (b), because the foul on Team A's coach occurred after determination of penalty enforcement, that penalty will be enforced separately. Since there were initially two fouls by Team B and one foul by Team A, the referee would have already determined that the penalty for only one of B's fouls would be enforced 15 yards to B's 20-yard line, giving Team A a first down. Team A will then be penalized 15 yards for the last foul from B's 20-yard line to B's 35-yard line, where it will be first and 10 for Team A.

10.2.5 SITUATION G: A1 scores on a long touchdown run. During the down, prior to the score, B1 committed a personal foul. During the down or following the score, A1 commits an unsportsmanlike conduct foul for celebrating. **RULING:** 10-2-5 does not apply as B1's personal foul was not dead ball. A can keep the score and will have the option to enforce B's foul on the try or on the succeeding free kick. B will then have the option to accept the penalty for A1's unsportsmanlike conduct foul as these fouls should be enforced separately and in order of occurrence. (8-2-2)

10.2.5 SITUATION H: B1 intercepts A1's pass and returns the interception for a touchdown. After the change of possession, A2 commits a personal foul during the return. During the down or following the score, B1 commits an unsportsmanlike foul for celebrating. **RULING:** 10-2-5 does not apply as A2's personal foul was not dead ball. B can keep the score and will have the option to enforce A's foul on the try or on the succeeding free kick. A will then have the option to accept the penalty for B1's unsportsmanlike conduct as these fouls should be enforced separately and in order of occurrence. (8-2-3)

BASIC SPOTS FOR PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

10.3.1 SITUATION A: With third and 10 from B's 40, A1 takes the snap and runs wide and pitches back to A2. A2 catches the ball behind the neutral zone and runs

to B's 10 where he is downed. (a) During the pitch, there is holding by B1; or (b) B2 grasps A2 by the face mask/helmet opening during the tackle. **RULING:** In (a), the holding by B1 occurred during a loose-ball play. The basic spot is the previous spot. If A accepts the penalty it will be A's ball first and 10 at B's 30-yard line. In (b), the face-mask/helmet opening penalty occurred during a running play. The basic spot is the end of the run. If A accepts the penalty, it will be A's ball first and goal at B's 5. (10-4-2b, 10-4-3)

10.3.1 SITUATION B: A1 receives the snap and begins a run behind the neutral zone: (a) A1 fumbles the ball and then kicks it while it is rolling on the ground; or (b) A1 advances beyond the neutral zone and either kicks or passes the ball forward. **RULING:** In (a), it is a foul during a loose-ball play and will be penalized from the spot of the illegal kick because it is a foul by A1 behind the basic spot. In (b), it is a foul during a running play and it will be penalized from the spot of the illegal kick or illegal pass which is the end of the run. (10-3-1c, 10-3-3b)

10.3.3 SITUATION A: B1 intercepts A's pass at the A10 and returns for a touchdown. B2 clips in A's end zone after the interception, but before the score. **RULING:** The basic spot is end of run which is the goal line. After penalty enforcement, it would be B's ball, first and 10, at A's 15-yard line.

10.3.3 SITUATION B: K1 kicks off from K's 40. The kick is caught by R1 at R's 5-yard line. R2 then clips at the 50-yard line. After the clip, R1 fumbles at R's 20-yard line, where R3 picks up fumble and advances for touchdown. **RULING:** The basic spot is where the run ended, which was the fumble at R's 20. After penalty enforcement, it would be R's ball, first and 10, at R's 10-yard line.

10.4.2 SITUATION A: Quarterback A1 receives the snap and while in or behind the neutral zone, throws a backward pass to A2. During his advance, but while still in or behind the neutral zone, A2 fumbles. While the ball is loose, there is a foul by B1. The fumble is recovered by A3. **RULING:** This is a foul during a loose-ball play. The penalty, if accepted, will be administered from the basic spot, which is the previous spot. A loose-ball play includes the run or runs which preceded the loose ball. A fumble by A2 in or behind the neutral zone constitutes a loose-ball play. (10-3-1c, 10-3-1 NOTE)

10.4.2 SITUATION B: During a scrimmage down, quarterback A1 throws a backward pass to A2 who runs about 30 yards behind the neutral zone and toward the sideline before throwing a forward pass downfield. There is holding by A3: (a) during the backward pass; or (b) during the run which preceded the forward pass; or (c) during the forward pass at the line of scrimmage. **RULING:** It is a loose-ball play in (a), (b) and (c). The basic spot in all three cases is the previous spot. **COMMENT:** All the action which preceded A2's forward pass is included in this single loose-ball play. While it is possible to have several running plays during a down, with each one having its own basic spot of enforcement (where the related run ended), there can only be one loose ball play during a down. Rule 10-3-1 NOTE

states: "The run(s) which precedes such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble is (are) considered part of the action during a loose-ball play." This means it includes all action from the time of the snap to the end of the "loose-ball play." When any foul occurs during a free kick, scrimmage kick, legal forward pass, backward pass (including the snap) or fumble made by A from in or behind the neutral zone...even if several of these actions happen during the same down...the basic spot remains the same, the previous spot which is the spot of the snap or free kick. (10-3-1 NOTE)

10.4.2 SITUATION C: On third and 20 from his own 35-yard line, A1 throws a forward pass to A2. Prior to the catch, B1 is detected holding. A2 advances to B's 45 following the catch. **RULING:** B1's foul occurred during a loose-ball play and if the penalty is accepted it will be enforced from the previous spot. A obviously will decline the penalty since it has gained 10 yards more and has a first down. The holding penalty cannot be added to the end of the run because the foul was committed during the loose-ball play. (10-3-1b, 10-4-2b)

10.4.2 SITUATION D: A1 behind the neutral zone has the ball batted from his possession by B1. While the ball is loose: (a) A2 holds B1, or (b) B2 grasps A2's face mask/helmet opening. **RULING:** Since A1 lost possession, the status of the ball is the same as if it had been fumbled by A1, therefore fouls during this interval are fouls during a loose-ball play. In (a), the penalty is enforced from the previous spot if A1's foul was beyond the previous spot or from the spot of the foul if A1's foul was committed behind the previous spot. In (b), the penalty is enforced from the previous spot, regardless of where B1's foul occurred or where the down ends.

10.4.3 SITUATION A: Fourth and 8 for K from its own 45-yard line. Prior to R2 catching the kick, R7 clips K5 at the 50-yard line and R2 catches the kick at his 20-yard line and is immediately tackled. **RULING:** The ball will belong to R, first and 10 at its 10-yard line. The basic spot is the 20-yard line as post-scrimmage kick enforcement applies. (2-41-6)

10.4.3 SITUATION B: Fourth and 9 for K from its own 40-yard line. R10 holds K11 at K's 42-yard line. R11 catches the kick at R's 25-yard line and is tackled at R's 29-yard line. **RULING:** If K accepts the penalty for holding, it will be K's ball, first and 10 from the 50-yard line. Post-scrimmage kick enforcement applies only to R fouls committed beyond the expanded neutral zone. (2-41-6)

10.4.3 SITUATION C: Fourth and 11 from K's 36-yard line. While the ball was in flight, beyond the expanded neutral zone, R6 was guilty of holding K3 at R's 32-yard line. The kick goes into the end zone. **RULING:** Since the kick ended in R's end zone, the post-scrimmage kick enforcement spot is the 20-yard line. It will be R's ball, first and 10 from R's 10-yard line after the half-the-distance enforcement. (2-41-6)

10.4.3 SITUATION D: K is in punt formation from the 50-yard line. Following the snap, but prior to the ball being kicked, R6 holds K4 at R's 46-yard line. The punt crosses the neutral zone, bounces at R's 25, and rolls to R's 18 where R4 recovers. **RULING:** This foul satisfies all the conditions for post-scrimmage kick en-

forcement as the foul occurred during the down and on R's side of the expanded neutral zone, so the basic spot is R's 18-yard line. Since R6's foul occurs beyond the basic spot, the penalty is enforced from the basic spot. R is penalized half the distance to the goal, making it R's ball first and 10 at R's 9-yard line. (2-16-2h)

10.4.3 SITUATION E: K2 punts from the 50-yard line. The punt crosses the neutral zone, bounces at the R45 and then rebounds back to K's 48-yard line where R4 recovers. Prior to the end of the kick, R6 clips K11 at R's 40-yard line. **RULING:** This foul satisfies all the conditions for post-scrimmage kick enforcement, so the basic spot is K's 48-yard line. Since R6's foul occurs behind the basic spot, the penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul. R is penalized 15 yards, making it R's ball first and 10 at R's 25-yard line. (2-16-2h)

10.4.4 SITUATION A: Fourth and 5 for K from R's 49-yard line. R9 catches the kick on the 15-yard line and returns the ball to R's 40-yard line, where he is downed. During the return, R3 holds K7 at R's 30-yard line. **RULING:** Following enforcement of R's holding penalty, it would R's ball, first and 10 from R's 20-yard line. This is not a post-scrimmage kick enforcement, but a post-possession foul. (2-41-6)

10.4.4 SITUATION B: A1 throws a pass from B's 22-yard line. B1 intercepts the pass in his own end zone and is tackled prior to leaving the end zone. During the run, B2 holds A2 at B's 10-yard line. **RULING:** The basic spot is the 20-yard line. If the penalty is accepted, it will be enforced from the spot of the foul. B will have a first and 10 from its own 5-yard line. If the penalty is declined, it will be B's first and 10 from B's 20-yard line.

10.4.4 SITUATION C: With third and 7 from A's 25-yard line, A1 advances to A's 35-yard line where he fumbles the ball. Before A1 fumbled the ball, A2 held B3 at A's 40-yard line. A3 recovers the fumble at A's 30-yard line. If B accepts the penalty for holding, where will the basic spot for penalty enforcement be? **RULING:** The basic spot is the spot where the run ended, which is A's 35-yard line. A would still have third and 7 from its own 25-yard line. (2-41-8)

10.4.4 SITUATION D: It is third and 6 from B's 40-yard line. A1 advances to B's 30 where B1 grabs his face mask/helmet opening in attempting the tackle. (a) A1 fumbles and B1 recovers and advances to B's 40; or (b) A1 hands off to A2 who is subsequently tackled on the 20; or (c) A1 pitches back to A2 who advances to B's 18-yard line. Where is the basic spot of enforcement if A accepts the penalty for B1's foul? **RULING:** In (a) and (c), the basic spot is where A1 lost possession by his fumble or pass and this is the end of the run. In both cases the penalty will be administered from B's 30 and put the ball on the 15-yard line. In (a), A retains possession since it had possession when the foul occurred. In (b), the handoff to A2 did not end the run. A1's run does not end unless possession is lost by the runner either fumbling or passing. The end of the run is where A2 was tackled. The penalty enforcement will result in the ball being placed on B's 10-yard line.

10.4.4 SITUATION E: R1 catches a punt on his 4-yard line and his momentum carries him behind his goal line where he is downed in the end zone. After the kick has ended, but before the ball becomes dead: (a) K1 holds in R's end zone; or (b) K1 holds at R's 5-yard line; or (c) R2 holds in the end zone. **RULING:** If R accepts the penalty in either (a) or (b), it will be R's ball first and 10 from its 14-yard line. R will put the ball in play by a snap. If R declines the penalty in either (a) or (b), the ball will be put in play by R at the 4-yard line since the kick was caught there. In (c), it is a safety since the foul occurred in the end zone. **COMMENT:** When the "momentum" exception applies and the ball becomes dead behind the goal line, if the penalty for a foul by either team is accepted, the end of the run is the spot where the kick, fumble or pass was caught or recovered. The penalty is enforced under the all-but-one principle. If "momentum" is not involved, the end of the run is the goal line. (8-5-2a EXCEPTION, 10-3-3c)

NONPLAYER AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOULS

10.4.5 SITUATION A: With third and goal from B's 2-yard line, A1's forward pass is intercepted by B1 in the end zone and returned for an apparent touchdown. During B1's run, B2 clips at the 50, after which the coach of B comes on the field at A's 40 to criticize the covering official's call. **RULING:** First and 10 for B on its 20-yard line. Since the foul by B's coach is an unsportsmanlike foul, it is enforced from the succeeding spot after the penalty for B2's live-ball foul is enforced. The line-to-gain equipment is not set until all penalties have been administered. This is not a multiple-foul situation.

10.4.5 SITUATION B: During a run by A1 on first down from A's 10 to midfield, A2 clips B1 at A's 20. (a) B1 swears at A2; or (b) A3 taunts B2. **RULING:** The unsportsmanlike foul in (a) or (b) is not paired with any other foul to create a double or multiple foul. Following the acceptance of the penalty for the clip by A2, the unsportsmanlike fouls will be administered from A's 10 which is the succeeding spot. In (a), it will be A's ball first down and 10 from its own 25-yard line. In (b), it will be A's ball first and 15 from A's 5-yard line. **COMMENT:** If a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul occurs during a down resulting in a change of possession or a first down, the line-to-gain equipment is set following enforcement of the penalty. Penalizing unsportsmanlike-player fouls from the succeeding spot provides consistent enforcement for all unsportsmanlike-conduct fouls. It also supports the philosophy that no unsportsmanlike-conduct foul should go unpenalized. A team does not have to decline an unsportsmanlike-conduct penalty in order to retain possession of the ball. (2-16-2f)

10.4.5 SITUATION C: With fourth and 40 from A's 10-yard line, A1 runs to A's 44 where he is downed. During the down, substitute B1 enters the field, but does not participate. **RULING:** B1's foul is a nonplayer foul penalized from the succeeding spot. It is B's ball first and 10 from A's 49-yard line. (2-16-2f, 3-7-6)

10.4.5 SITUATION D: With the score, B-14 and A-8, a pass from A1 is complete in the end zone to A2 during the down in which time expires for the fourth period. During the down, there is holding by B1 and after the down, B2 is charged with an unsportsmanlike foul. **RULING:** A will undoubtedly accept the result of the play and enforce the holding penalty from the 3-yard line and enforce the penalty for the unsportsmanlike foul. The ball would then be snapped for the try from the $\frac{3}{4}$ -yard line. (3-3-3a, 10-5-1f)

10.4.5 SITUATION E: A scores on the last play of the: (a) second period; or (b) fourth period, to make the score, B-21 and A-19. During A's successful 2-point try, B1 commits an unsportsmanlike foul. **RULING:** In (a), the penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot on the kickoff to start the third period. In (b), the penalty for B1's foul will be administered from the succeeding spot if an overtime is played. **COMMENT:** When a procedure for resolving ties is being used, the referee should explain the options very carefully to the captains and designated representatives at the time of the coin toss prior to the overtime period. For example, if the captain of B wins the choice, he may: (1) choose the end of the field in which the ball will be put in play or he may choose to go on; (2) offense; or (3) defense. Should he choose to go on offense first, B will put the ball in play first and goal from the 25-yard line. Should he choose to go on defense first, A will put the ball in play first and goal from the 5-yard line, which is half the distance from the spot of enforcement, if the penalty is accepted by the designated representative. If the captain of B chooses to designate the end of the field from which the ball will be put in play, the captain of A then will have the choice of going on offense or defense first. (2-41-9, 3-3-3d)

10.4.5 SITUATION F: After A1 scores a touchdown, he is struck by B1. The coach of A then insults a game official before the penalty for the personal foul by B1 is administered. **RULING:** The penalties for both the dead-ball personal foul by B1 and the unsportsmanlike foul by the coach of A will cancel. If B1's act was judged by the game official to be fighting, he shall be ejected. (2-41-10; 8-2-5; 8-3-2; 9-4-3b, g, j; 9-8-1c; 10-2-5b, c)

10.4.5 SITUATION G: A2 commits an unsportsmanlike dead-ball foul: (a) following a touchdown by A1; or (b) following a successful try. **RULING:** In (a), B is given the option of accepting the penalty enforcement on the try or the subsequent kick. In (b), the succeeding spot is the kickoff. **COMMENT:** If the try had been the last play of the game and the score was tied, the succeeding spot for enforcement of the penalty for the foul by A2 would be the start of the overtime procedure. If an overtime is not authorized, the foul cannot be penalized because there would be no succeeding spot. (2-15, 2-41, 8-2-4)

10.4.5 SITUATION H: B1 intercepts a pass in his own end zone and is tackled there after attempting to advance. During B1's run, B2 clips A1 at B's 4-yard line. **RULING:** The basic spot is the 20-yard line. If the penalty is accepted it will be

enforced from the spot of the foul, B's ball first and 10 from B's 2-yard line. If the penalty is declined, it is B's ball first and 10 from B's 20-yard line.

10.4.5 SITUATION I: K1's scrimmage kick is blocked on K's 5-yard line and is rolling away from K's goal line when R1 muffs the ball into K's end zone (applies a new force to a grounded kick). K2 recovers the ball and attempts to advance, but is downed in the end zone. During K2's run: (a) R1 holds K3 in the end zone; or (b) K3 holds R1 in the end zone. **RULING:** In (a), it is a touchback and the basic spot is the 20-yard line. In (b), since the foul is in the end zone, it is a safety.

10.4.6 SITUATION A: B1 intercepts A1's pass in B's end zone where B1 is grabbed by the face mask by A2 who twists the mask. B1 then fumbles while in the end zone and (a) the ball rolls back into the field of play and then goes out of bounds at B's 2-yard line; (b) the ball rolls back into the field of play where B7 recovers the ball at B's 5-yard line. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), the basic spot is the 20-yard line (15-yard line in 6, 8 and 9 player) and the accepted penalty will result in a first down for Team B at its 35-yard line.

10.4.6 SITUATION B: B1 intercepts A's pass in B's end zone, B2 clips A9 at B's 10-yard line after the change of possession. B1 then fumbles in B's end zone and the ball rolls out of the end zone and out of bounds at B's 2-yard line. **RULING:** The penalty is enforced under the all-but-one principle. The basic spot is the 20-yard line. The penalty would be enforced half the distance, first and 10 for B on the 5-yard line. (10-4-6)

10.4.7 SITUATION: B1 intercepts A1's pass at B's 6-yard line and retreats to B's end zone where B1 is grabbed by the face mask by A2 who twists the mask. B1 then fumbles while in the end zone and (a) the ball rolls back into the field of play and then goes out of bounds at B's 2-yard line; (b) the ball rolls back into the field of play where B7 recovers the ball at B's 5-yard line. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), the basic spot is the goal line and the accepted penalty will result in a first down for Team B at its 15-yard line.

FOUL DURING SCORING PLAY

10.5.2 SITUATION: A's ball second and 5 from its own 9-yard line. A2 muffs the handoff and the ball rolls into A's end zone. A1 picks up the ball and is immediately tackled by B3 in the end zone. B3 grasped A1 by the face mask/helmet opening in making the tackle. **RULING:** If A declines the penalty, this play would result in a safety. If the penalty is accepted, it will be enforced from the goal line, making it first and 10 for A from its 15-yard line. (8-5-2b)

10.5.3 SITUATION A: With third and 6 from B's 35-yard line, a pass from A1 is intercepted at B's 25 by B1 who advances for an apparent touchdown. During the run by B1, A1 kicks B2. **RULING:** B may (a) accept the touchdown and enforce the penalty on the try or on the subsequent kickoff; (b) decline the penalty. In either case, A1 is disqualified for fighting. (8-2-3, 9-4-1)

10.5.3 SITUATION B: Third down and 12 on A's 40-yard line. A1 drops back to throw a pass. The pass is completed to A2 who scores on the run following the reception. During the down, (a) A3 holds B1 on A's 37-yard line or (b) A's coach is observed standing inbounds on B's 20-yard line. **RULING:** (a) If B accepts the penalty for holding by A3, the score is nullified and following enforcement, it will be A's ball, third down and 25 to go on A's 27. In (b), the score stands. Following enforcement, the try will be from A's 18-yard line or the foul may be enforced on the subsequent kickoff. (8-2-4, 9-2-1c, 9-8-1k, 10-5-3)

10.5.3 SITUATION C: Late in the game R is trailing by nine points as K prepares to punt from its 4-yard line. During the kick, K2 holds R4 in the end zone. R5 returns the punt for a touchdown. **RULING:** R may (a) accept the penalty, score the safety and have K free-kick from its 20-yard line or accept the penalty with the distance penalty enforced on the subsequent try; or (b) decline the penalty and accept the results of the play, which would be a touchdown. (8-2-3, 10-4-2 EXCEPTION)

SPECIAL ENFORCEMENTS

10.5.4 SITUATION A: A's ball second and 5 from its own 9-yard line. A2 fumbles the ball on his own 5-yard line and the ball rolls into the end zone. A1 recovers the ball in the end zone and is downed in the end zone, but B3 held A3 while the ball was loose. **RULING:** A undoubtedly will accept the penalty, because to decline would result in a safety. The foul occurred during a loose-ball play, therefore, the previous spot will be the enforcement spot, making it first and 10 for A from its own 19-yard line.

10.5.4 SITUATION B: During the last timed down of the first half, A1 retreats into his own end zone to attempt a pass, but he is downed there. During the down there is holding in the end zone by: (a) A2, or (b) by B1. **RULING:** In (a), it is a safety and B would score 2 points whether the penalty is accepted or declined since the run ended in the end zone and the foul was in the end zone. If B accepts the penalty, the period is not extended with an untimed down. In (b), if the penalty is accepted it will be enforced from the goal line and the period is extended.



National Federation of State High School Associations

OFFICIATING FOOTBALL

A screenshot of the NFHS Learning Center website. The page title is "Officiating Football" and it is categorized as a "Sport Specific Course". The page includes a "Description" section with the following text: "Officiating Football has been developed for new game officials to use as supplemental high school skills training. The course explores principles and practice of good football officiating, through rules knowledge and professionalism. The course discusses the responsibilities and the potential impact on teams - a teacher who officiating and legal violations, and shows how to identify both." Below the description is a video player showing a football official in a striped shirt. To the right of the video, under the heading "This Course Includes:", there is a list of three items: "Approved for 2 Clock Hours", "Certificate of Completion", and "Additional Resources".

This officiating course is part of the **NFHS Learning Center**. It is designed to assist individuals in becoming a better official and improving the experience for the official and the student-athlete.

To access the course online, visit **www.nfhslearn.com**.

Cost: Free



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COACHING FOOTBALL



This sport-specific course is part of the **NFHS Learning Center**. It was developed in partnership with USA Football.

To access the course online, visit www.nfhslearn.com.

Cost: \$50