

13th  
Edition

HIGH SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL

# PENALTY ENFORCEMENTS MADE EASY

By Jeffrey Stern

REFEREE

FROM REFEREE AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPORTS OFFICIALS



**REFEREE**

13th  
Edition

**HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL**

**PENALTY  
ENFORCEMENTS  
MADE  
EASY**

By Jeffrey Stern

***High School Football Penalty Enforcements Made Easy - 13th Edition***

By Jeffrey Stern, senior editor, *Referee* magazine

Cover photo by Ken Kassens

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Published by Referee Enterprises, Inc. ([www.Referee.com](http://www.Referee.com))  
and the National Association of Sports Officials ([www.naso.org](http://www.naso.org))

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN-13: 978-1-58208-559-3

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# INTRODUCTION

Calling a foul and enforcing a penalty aren't as easy as coaches and fans think it is. It takes solid rules knowledge, great judgment, communication and complete knowledge of the mechanics involved.

This book won't magically give you better judgment, but it will help you understand the hows and whys of the process, from the time the flag is thrown until the ball is next snapped or kicked.

When a crew messes up any part of a penalty enforcement, the entire crew is to blame. That's why *High School Penalty Enforcements Made Easy* isn't written from an individual perspective. Every official should – make that must – know the procedures.

The first five chapters take you through the process. Chapters 6 through 17 explain the various types of plays on which fouls occur and how they are handled. They are broken up into categories. The idea to place penalty enforcements into slots sprang from the mind of Tom Kelleher, an NFL official from 1960-87. Ed Hochuli, one of the best referees to ever work in the NFL, has refined it. Karl Richins, former collegiate referee and retired coordinator of officials for the Big Sky Conference, adapted Hochuli's idea into one for college rules. Richins shared it with *Referee*, a partnership was born and we decided high school officials would benefit from one too.

This book is designed to simplify how penalties are enforced. It is a reference and study tool to help you make penalty enforcement second nature.

Here's hoping you find this book as helpful as I have.

Jeffrey Stern  
Senior editor  
*Referee* magazine

# CHAPTER 1

CALLING A FOUL  
AND USING THE FLAG



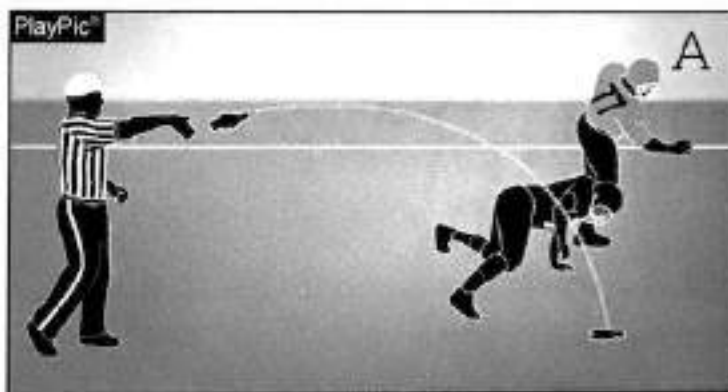


**W**hen you observe a live-ball foul, it is crucial that you drop your penalty marker at the proper yardline and withhold the whistle until the play is over. Make a mental note of the spot of the foul and the number of the offending player but continue to officiate the play; don't stop at the spot of the foul and fail to cover the play to its conclusion.

If the spot of the foul will be the enforcement spot, you must get your flag as close to that spot as possible. If you're off target, you should relocate the flag as soon as possible after the play by picking it up and moving it definitively. The longer you delay making that correction, the more it will appear you are manipulating the situation. Also, attempting to kick it to the correct spot gives an underhanded appearance.

Correct penalty enforcement can be facilitated if the flag is thrown properly. There are two ways to throw the flag: into the air or carefully to a spot.

In PlayPic A, the covering official sees a live-ball foul: the offensive player clipping the opponent on a running play. Because the penalty may be enforced from the spot of the foul, it is important for the official to throw the flag to the yardline on which the foul was committed. The flag should be thrown so that it hits the ground on either

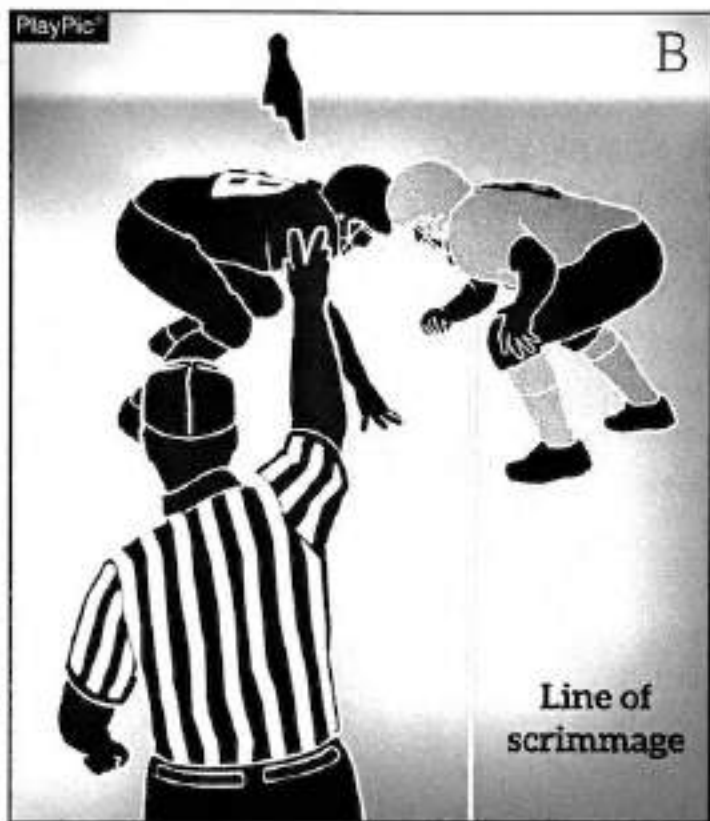


Throw the flag at the spot, not the players.

# CHAPTER 1

side of the players. Throwing the flag in the direction of the players will help the official observe the number of the offending player. Whether an overhand or underhand motion is used is up to the individual.

For dead-ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, such as a false start or encroachment, the whistle should be blown and the flag thrown immediately. In



For fouls that prevent the snap, throw the flag into the air.

PlayPic B, a defensive player has committed a dead-ball foul by crossing the neutral zone and contacting a team A player. The flag should be thrown into the air in front of you and the stop-the-clock signal given. Again, don't stop officiating. The offensive lineman could take exception to the penalty and retaliate. Once you are confident the action has stopped, jog toward the center of the field and report the foul to the referee. Don't signal; the other wing official may well have a different view or another foul.

It is strongly recommended that an official who throws a flag or sees one on the field use three short blasts on the whistle after the ball is dead to bring the flag to the referee's attention. The whistle should be accompanied by the stop-the-clock signal.

## CALLING A FOUL AND USING THE FLAG

Sometimes the calling official has to leave the spot of the flag to report to the referee. If feasible, another official should take note of the spot to ensure the flag isn't moved.

If two different officials throw flags on the same play, it is important they communicate to see if they saw the same foul or have two different fouls.

A few techniques to avoid: slam-dunking the flag to the ground; looking angry when you toss it; holding the flag and waving it, instead of throwing it; or throwing it at the fouling player. On late hits, the latter looks confrontational, and worse yet, might hit the player in the face.

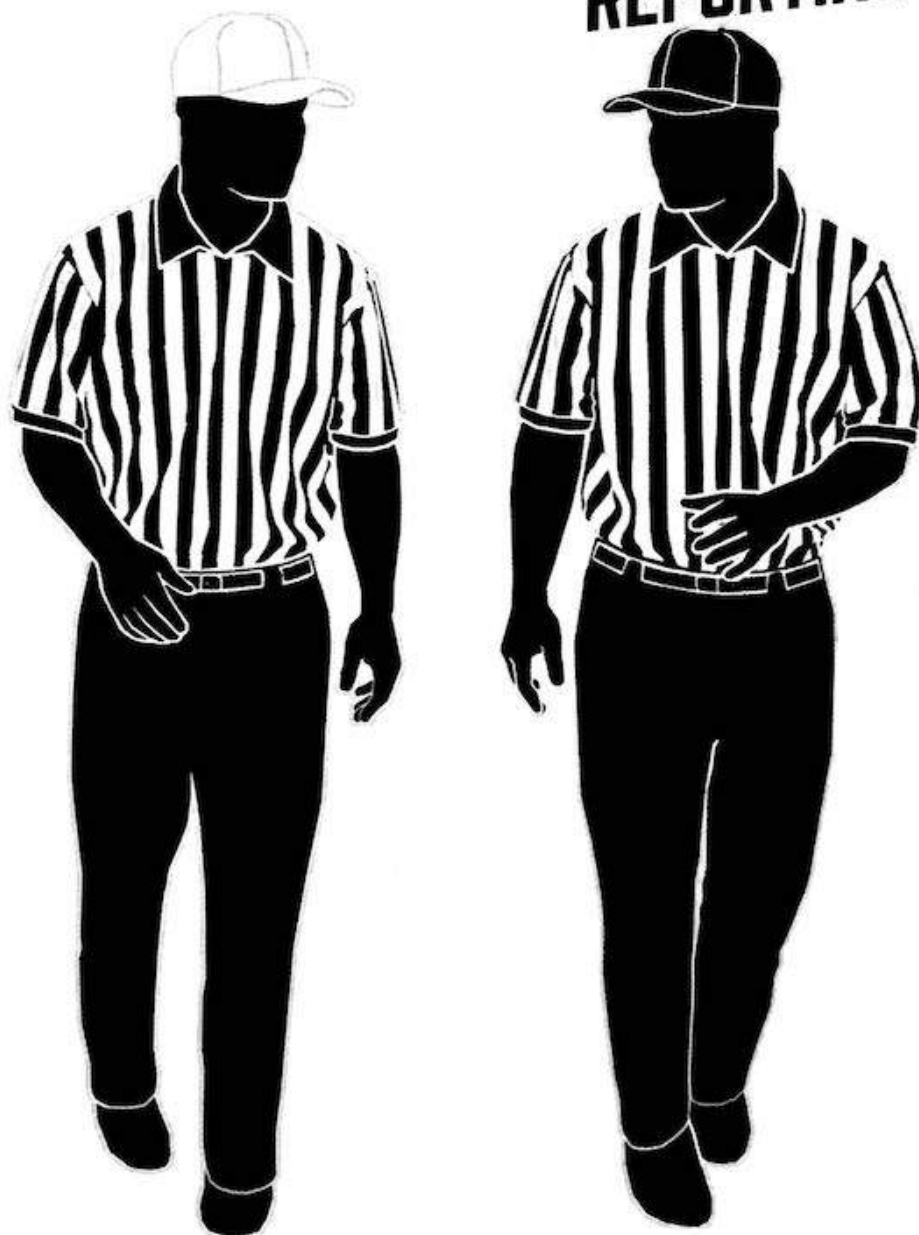
### ME-TOO FLAGS

Avoid throwing "me-too" flags. That involves having the official closest to the official who threw the flag also throwing a flag as a means of supporting the partner. The concept is the coach will think it is an acceptable call because two officials had it. The technique is both unnecessary and deceptive.

While there are some situations in which the coverage will overlap two officials, many plays dictate each official maintain unique coverage. Further, if the two officials were to offer contradicting explanations of the foul, the crew's integrity would be severely diminished. Finally, excessive flags will contribute to an image of a "flag happy" crew.

# CHAPTER 2

## REPORTING A FOUL

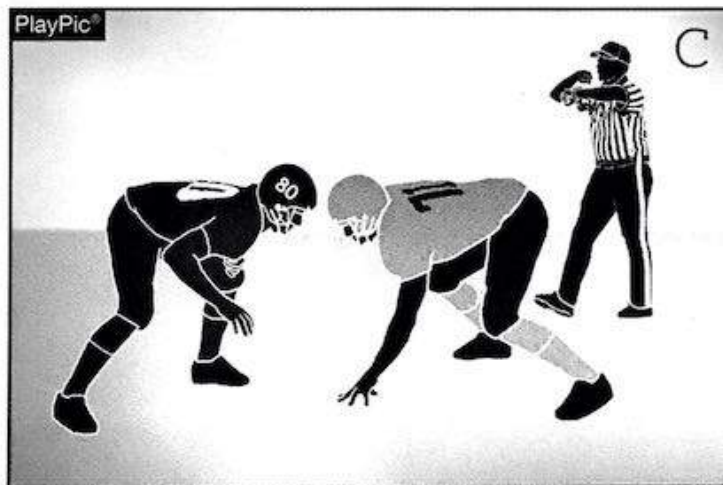


**F**ouls must be reported to the press box and both coaches. Additionally, all fouls must be communicated to all members of the officiating crew as each official has a role in penalty enforcement.

Once the flag is thrown, the official who threw it must ensure both the referee and linesman are aware as soon as possible after the play ends. The linesman will ensure the chains and box are not moved and the referee will prepare for the steps that follow.

The referee's first step in quality communication is to get an accurate report from the official who threw the flag. The referee must then move clear of the players, face the press box, stand stationary and indicate the foul and the offending team using the appropriate signal.

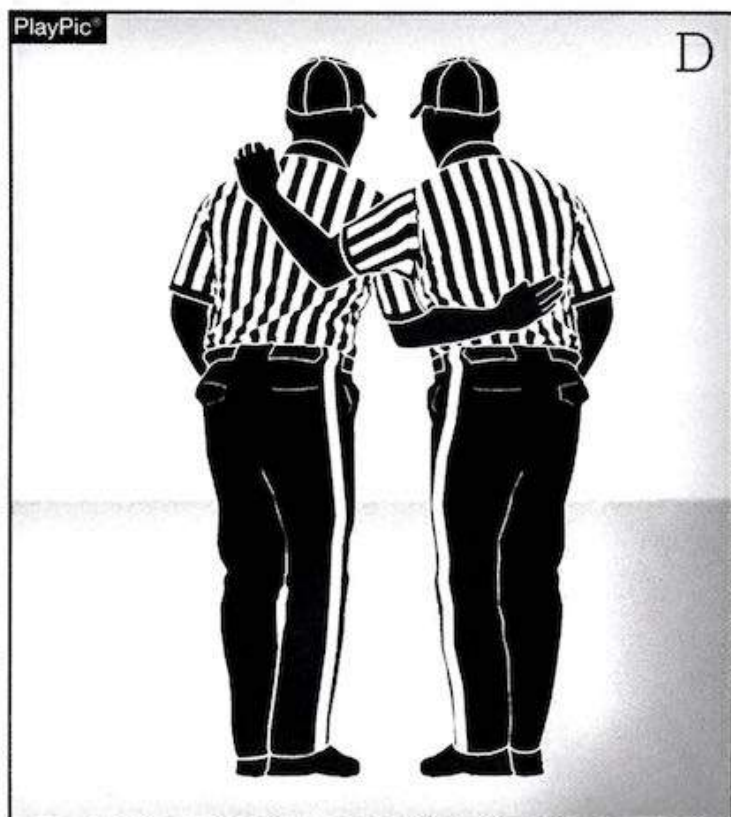
When wing officials throw a flag for a dead-ball foul prior to the snap, they should jog slowly toward the middle of the field to report the foul to the referee. Remember to practice good dead-ball officiating during the jog; if a player has crossed the neutral zone and contacted an opponent, the contacted opponent may try to retaliate.



Do not signal fouls from your position.

# CHAPTER 2

A technique to avoid is signaling the foul rather than reporting the foul to the referee (PlayPic C). It's common in the NFL and major college games, but should not be practiced at other levels because another official may have a different foul. For instance, say the line judge throws a flag because a



Keep your hands off each other when discussing a play.

team B player entered the neutral zone and contacted the left guard but the umpire throws a flag because the snapper illegally moved the ball. If the line judge stays on the wing, gives the hands-on-hips signal and points to the defense but the penalty is assessed against the offense, the coach of the offensive team is certain to be upset. Instead of signaling from the wing, in that case the linesman, line judge and umpire

should get together to discuss what each official has seen, then report their decision to the referee. The wing officials then return to the sidelines to explain to the coaches what occurred.

Conferences among officials should be kept as brief as possible. When reporting a foul, be thorough

## REPORTING A FOUL

but give the referee only the information he needs. If two or more officials need to discuss a call, avoid putting arms around another official's waist or back (PlayPic D, page 14). It gives the appearance the officials are conspiring or one is trying to convince another official what should be called.

### GETTING THE EXPLANATION

Some referees simply want to hear the foul and offender, such as, "No. 49 offense, illegal motion." Other referees prefer to be told what the reporting official saw, as in, "No. 49 cut up-field too soon." It may make sense to use both techniques depending on the experience level of the crewmate. By getting more detail from newer officials, the referee can ensure there really was a foul. Be careful with movement fouls when the order of occurrence is a prime factor and be especially careful if offensive players on the end of the line are involved – their movement is not as restricted as it is for the interior linemen who cannot move from a three-point stance.

On certain fouls, it is critical the referee be told the status of the ball when the foul occurred or whether a player involved was an eligible receiver. Of course the guilty team must also be identified. The trend at many levels is to get away from referring to teams by jersey color. The pregame conference should include a discussion of how to report fouls.

### GIVING THE EXPLANATION

When it is obvious to the referee a penalty will be accepted, the designated representative need not

# CHAPTER 2

be consulted. A good example involves a team A foul that occurs prior to a turnover. Team B will obviously want to decline the penalty and take possession. If a choice needs to be made, all aspects of the penalty (e.g. an automatic first down, ejection, etc.) should be explained to the designated representative. State the options briefly, but correctly, clearly and courteously. The umpire must listen to the referee's explanation to ensure the options are properly offered.

The wing official on the sideline of the penalized team should tell the coach the number of the guilty player and explain the foul. The call gains credibility if you say, "Your man in motion cut up-field too soon," instead of, "There was illegal motion." The other wing official need only tell the coach the nature of the foul.

Once the referee determines whether the penalty has been accepted or declined, the other members of the crew must be informed. If the penalty is accepted, the umpire must understand where to walk from – the enforcement spot, how far to walk and which direction to walk. It's quite embarrassing to have the penalty enforced against the offended team and having to reverse tracks amid the inevitable protests.

The wing officials must be apprised so they can keep their sideline informed. The wing on the offending team's sideline should tell the coach the number of the player who fouled; however, if the covering official didn't get the number, don't guess or make one up. If a non-existent number is reported, crew credibility is immediately destroyed.



## REPORTING A FOUL

### WORKING WITH COACHES

When the referee and umpire (or other officials) meet with the coaches before the game, they should obtain the name of the representative who will make penalty decisions (Hint: It will almost always be the head coach).

As noted earlier, there are situations in which the penalty will be obviously accepted or declined. But there are others in which the decision must be obtained. For example: Team K punts on fourth and seven from its own 35 yardline. Team R is flagged for running into the kicker, which carries a five-yard penalty. Team R makes a fair catch at its own 40 yardline. Team K's coach may wish to accept the penalty, bringing up fourth and two, and go for the first down, or decline the penalty because he is happy with team R's field position. The wing official on team K's side of the field should explain the options to the coach and relay the decision to the referee.

A similar situation occurs when team K's free kick goes out of bounds untouched by team R. Team R has the choice of a rekick after enforcement, taking the ball 25 yards from the spot of the kick or taking a five-yard penalty from the spot the ball went out of bounds. Rather than have the referee (who begins the play at team R's goalline), sprint up-field and try to find the designated representative, the official on team R's side of the field and nearest to team R's coach can explain the options.

# CHAPTER 2

A foul by the defense on a try will move the ball to the 1-1/2 yardline. If team A is not considering going for two points, it may very well want to decline the penalty, stick to its normal routine and kick from the spot it has practiced a thousand times.

When the offense chooses to punt because it is just out of field goal range, teams will often intentionally incur a penalty for delay. The strategy is to have five more yards to put the punt out of bounds deeper in the opponent's territory and avoid the touchback. Team B may prefer to decline the penalty and foil the strategy.

That situation brings into focus another time the crew will have to work with the coaches and each other. When a penalty is accepted with less than two minutes remaining in either half, the offended team may have the option to start the game clock on the snap.

The wing official on the offended team's sideline should find out if the coach wishes to exercise the clock-on-the-snap option. If so, the opposite wing informs the coach of the offending team.

Conversely, if the option is not exercised by the coach of the offended team and the clock is to start on the ready, the offending team may use a charged team timeout (if the team has one remaining) to keep the clock from starting until the next snap.

Those are classic examples of why it is important for every official to know and understand penalties and enforcements.

There are several types of fouls that will always be accepted:

## REPORTING A FOUL

- **Dead-ball fouls.** Since the replay of a down is not in question, the distance is gratis. Remember, however, some dead-ball fouls occurring after a score may be enforced on the succeeding kickoff. Penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct are enforced as if they are dead-ball fouls and will likely be accepted.

- **Fouls after a change of possession.** Certain fouls during kickoff, punt, interception and fumble returns are similar to dead-ball fouls in that there is no down to replay. The interests of the game are best served by immediately walking off those penalties. If there is more than one foul against the same team, you can easily figure out which penalty will yield the greatest benefit.

- **Fouls that negate scores, turnovers and first downs.**

- **“Add on” or “tack-on” fouls.** Examples of live-ball fouls that add yardage to the end of a play include a defensive facemask foul on a running play and roughing the passer on a completed pass.

- **Loss of down/automatic first down.** It would be most unusual for a team not to want a penalty that carries loss of down or an automatic first down.

Declination of a penalty can also be an obvious choice. When a play results in a first down and the penalty would not, you can signal the refusal without discussion.

# CHAPTER 3

## ENFORCING THE PENALTY

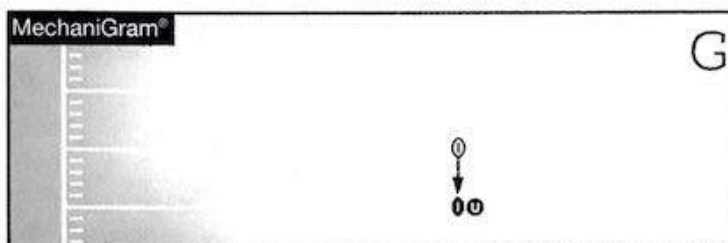
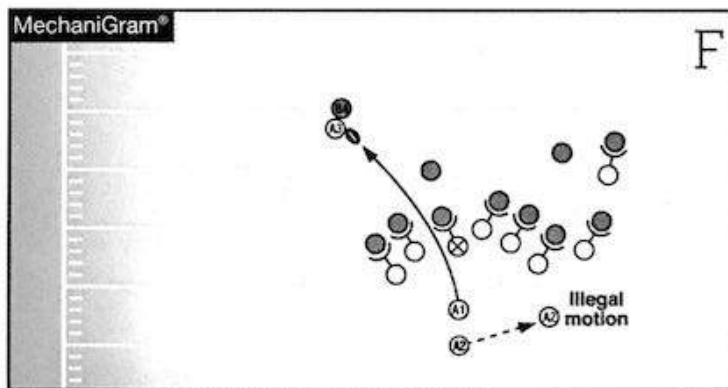
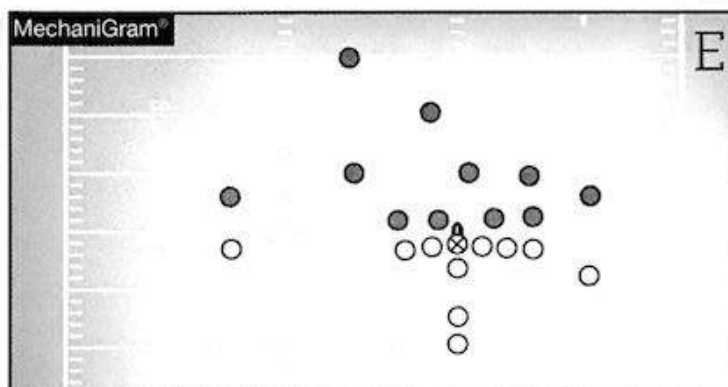


**W**hen a penalty has previous-spot enforcement, the ball must be returned not only to the yardline at which the ball was last snapped, it must also go back to the spot between the hashes (the lateral position of the ball).

In MechaniGram E, team A is snapping from the hashmark on its own 20 yardline. In MechaniGram F, A2 is flagged for illegal motion as A1 completes a pass to A3 closer to the opposite hash. A3 is immediately tackled by B4.

When team B accepts the penalty, the umpire must return to the exact place from which the play started – that is, the same hashmark on team A's 20 yardline – and the penalty is enforced from there (MechaniGram G).

The umpire should avoid “marching off the penalty” a yard at a time. It looks far more professional to calculate the distance from the enforcement spot and go directly to the proper yardline. For instance: Team A is to be



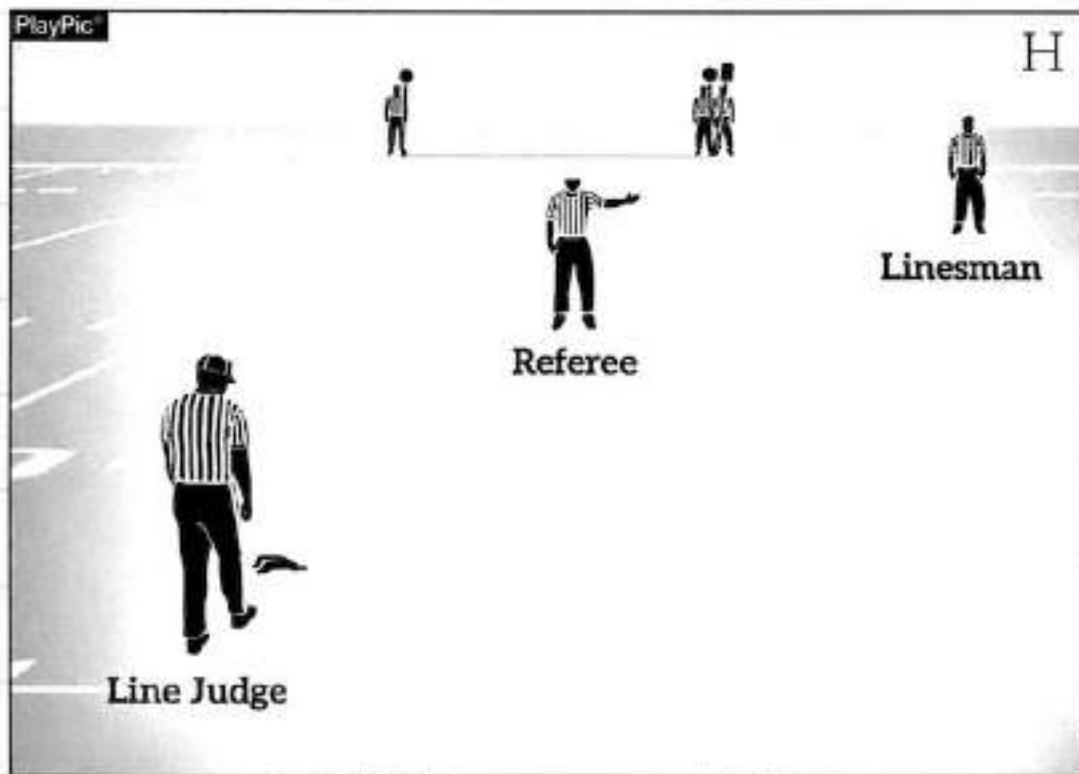
# CHAPTER 3

penalized for holding. The spot of enforcement is team A's 37 yardline. The umpire should move briskly and directly to team A's 27 yardline and place the ball.

The linesman must be certain of the down number. Don't forget declination of a penalty or acceptance of a penalty that includes loss of down will not result in a replay of the previous down.

As a backup to ensure the umpire has properly enforced the penalty, the linesman should proceed to the succeeding spot. Once the penalty is enforced, the linesman should have the down box moved (and the line-to-gain equipment if appropriate).

As seen in PlayPic H, the line judge has flagged team A for a five-yard, dead-ball foul. As the referee is signaling



The linesman goes to the succeeding spot as the referee signals.

## ENFORCING THE PENALTY

the foul, the linesman moves to the succeeding spot. The umpire should still calculate where the ball should be placed and take it to that spot, but if the penalty is enforced correctly, that spot will be where the linesman has already placed himself.

In order to use the mechanic properly, the linesman must obtain the penalty information from the referee and umpire. The linesman can then report the foul to the head coach on his side of the field before moving to the succeeding spot. In the pregame meeting with the chain crew, the linesman must emphasize the box and chains should not be moved until the linesman signals them to do so. That prevents a premature or incorrect movement of the box and chains. The line judge should stand at the enforcement spot until the ball is marked ready for play.

From the time the whistle blows to prevent the snap or indicate the ball is dead until the referee next signals the ball is ready, any official not involved in the enforcement process must watch the players. If players from both teams are congregating, the back judge in a crew of five may have to move up toward the line to let players know they should return to their respective sides of the ball.

Finally, the referee should again move clear of the players, face the press box, stand stationary and indicate the foul and the offending team using the appropriate signals.

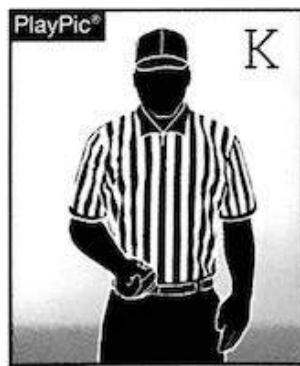
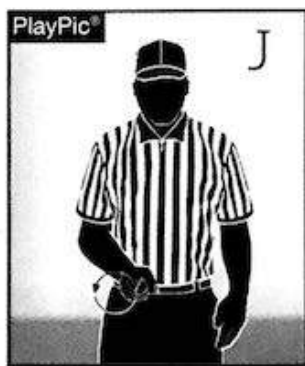
Many fouls, such as false start, delay of game and encroachment, are self-evident to players, coaches, fans and public address announcers. Those fouls do not require a preliminary signal and then another signal after enforcement.

# CHAPTER 3

Just as officials should avoid making calls on the run, referees should avoid “walking through” their



Referees should avoid “walking through” their signals.



Remind the referee to start the clock on the ready (left) or snap.

penalty signals. Walking through means failing to come to a complete stop before signaling, as seen in PlayPic I.

To give the signal to the press box, keep your head up. Pick out a spot about halfway up the stands and focus your eyes on that spot. You should have no facial expression; you’re neither happy nor unhappy to be performing the task.

Give the signal and point to the offending team. Avoid jabbing the arm when signaling; it is another sign you are angry or feel a sense of “gotcha” toward the offending team.

Referees should avoid the habit of striving to get between the hashes to signal every penalty. If a play ends in a side zone, you only need to be clear of players in order to signal a penalty.

Once the referee ensures all officials, the box and chains are in their proper places, he can give the ready signal.



## ENFORCING THE PENALTY

The referee has a lot on his mind when enforcing a penalty. The line judge can help by reminding the referee when the clock should start. After the referee has signaled the press box, he need only glance at the line judge to see if the wing official is rotating his index finger (PlayPic J, page 24), which indicates the clock starts on the ready, or snapping his fingers (PlayPic K, page 24), which indicates the clock starts on the snap. Many crews have adopted other signals; the important thing is the information is conveyed. It is suggested the line judge perform that duty since the referee is already facing the line judge to signal the press box.

### UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOULS AND EJECTIONS

For all unsportsmanlike fouls, all officials should record the player's number or the coach's position (i.e. head coach, offensive coordinator, etc.). Remember a second unsportsmanlike foul against the same individual results in his ejection, but a flagrant foul (personal or unsportsmanlike) results in immediate ejection.

Only the referee should use the ejection signal, and only when signaling the penalty to the press box. Use the approved signal, not a baseball-style windup and throw.

If the penalty for a foul includes ejecting the offender, the official who called the foul must inform the offending player. The official should report the player's number and the type of infraction to referee, coach and other members of the officiating crew. Keep in mind the coach will likely want a more detailed description than that provided for a more routine foul.

# CHAPTER 3

All officials should record the ejected player's number and the time of the ejection. The calling official may want to write a brief description of the

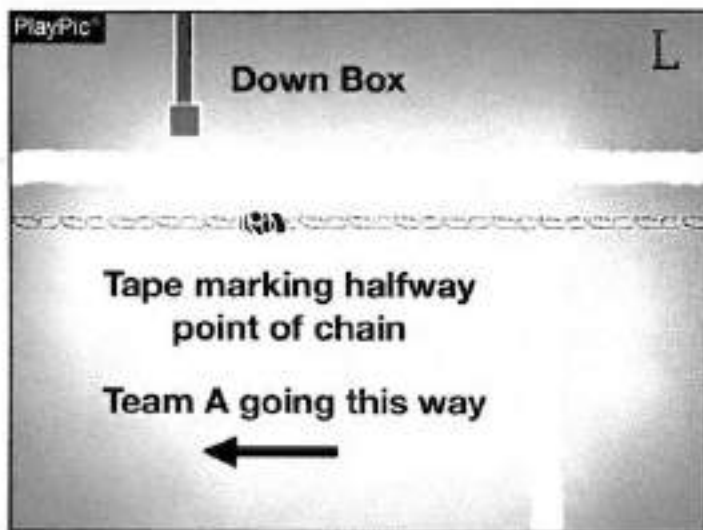
incident on the game card or a separate card in order to properly report the incident to the state association or similar authority.

Remember coaches who are ejected must leave the stadium area before the game may resume and the coach may not have further contact with the team for the remainder of the game including halftime. Ejected players are not required to leave the field.

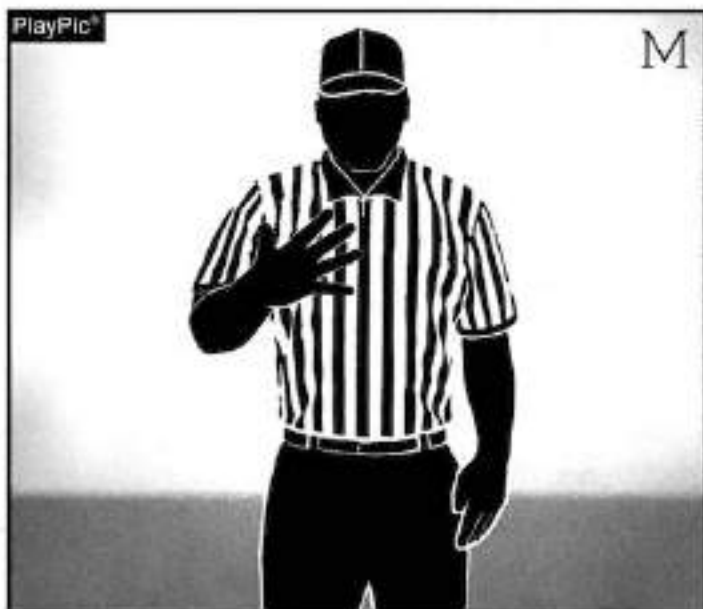
## HELPING THE REFEREE

Crews can expedite penalty enforcement and avoid unnecessary measurements through communication between the referee and linesman.

In PlayPic L, the down box is farther downfield than the



Tape on the chain helps determine if team A has less than five yards for a first down.



The linesman indicating "five will get you one."

## ENFORCING THE PENALTY

tape used to indicate the halfway point on the chain. That means a five-yard penalty on team B will result in a first down for team A, or as often abbreviated by crews, "Five will get you one."

The linesman can indicate the situation by making eye contact with the referee and placing the palm of his hand flat against his chest (PlayPic M, page 26). If a team B foul such as encroachment occurs, the referee already knows that a new series will be awarded.

**NOTE:** The chain and box are not shown in the proper place two yards outside the sideline in order to better illustrate the point.

One of the hazards of being a wing official is being the target of angry coaches, even when the wing official hasn't made the call in question. Brisk and businesslike penalty administration will get the ball in play more quickly, thus diverting the attention of the angry coaches. If the referee has made the call, the wing official can help the referee simply by standing near the flag.

In PlayPic N (on page 28), the quarterback, having been flushed from the pocket by a hard-charging defender, was roughed after releasing the pass. The referee has properly followed the flow of the play toward team B's sideline and is in position to flag the foul while the wing official is observing players downfield.

Because the foul occurred in front of team B's bench, the sideline may well erupt in anger. It is tempting for the referee to remain in front

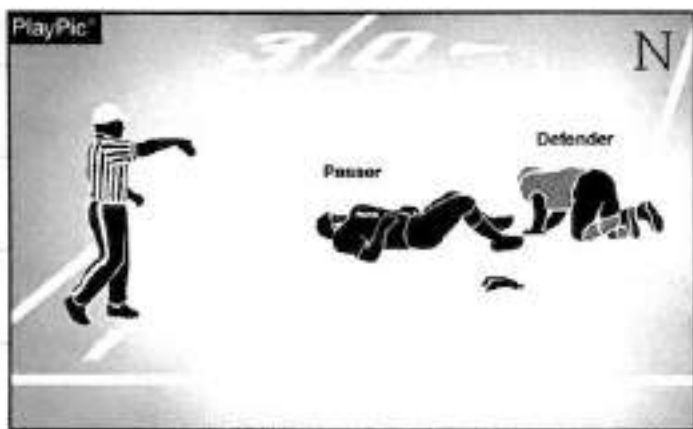
# CHAPTER 3

of the bench and argue or try to explain the call. A better procedure is for the wing official (in this case, the linesman) to come back to the spot of the flag and mark the spot while the referee gives the preliminary signal (PlayPic O) and works with the

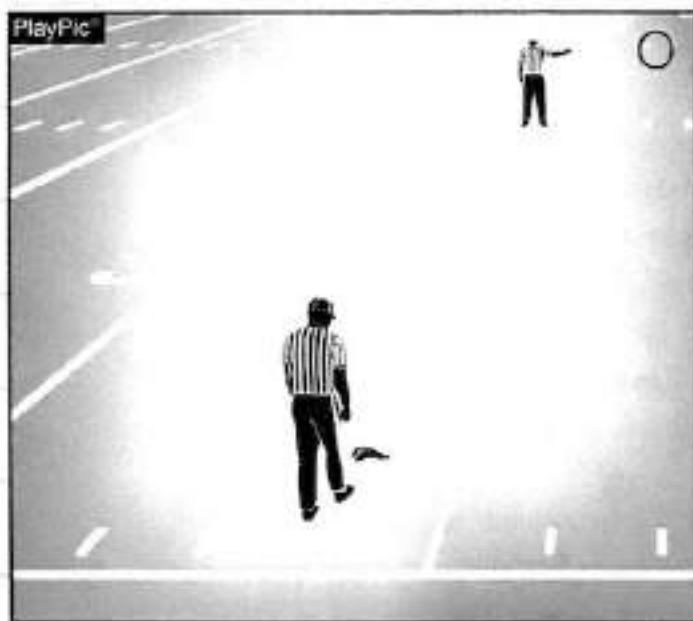
umpire to enforce the penalty.

The wing official on the opposite side of the field (in this case, the line judge) should casually walk off the penalty to serve as a backup for the umpire. The umpire and line judge should wind up at the same spot; if not, the proper spot should be determined before the umpire places the ball on the ground and the chains set at the new spot. If done properly, the line judge will be mirroring the umpire's spot.

Once the penalty has been enforced and the ball properly spotted, the linesman should pick up the flag, jog to the middle of the field and toss or hand the flag back to the referee (PlayPic P, page 29).



If the referee has a foul near the fouling team's sideline (above), the wing official can stand over the flag while the referee can move farther away from any angry coaches.



# ENFORCING THE PENALTY

## 'EATING' A FLAG

All officials have made a call they would like to have back. Thus, the timeless advice, "When in doubt, don't throw the flag," or, "If you see a foul, flag it, but if you only think it's a foul, don't."

In addition to officials occasionally asking each other for help, a "change of heart" flag can occur once in a while as well. Although those are difficult to explain to coaches, it's unfair to penalize a team when the covering official suddenly realizes he isn't sure a foul occurred.

If you feel you've thrown an erroneous flag, explain the situation to the referee. Both coaches will want to know what's going on. But only the referee should "wave off the flag" as seen in PlayPic Q.



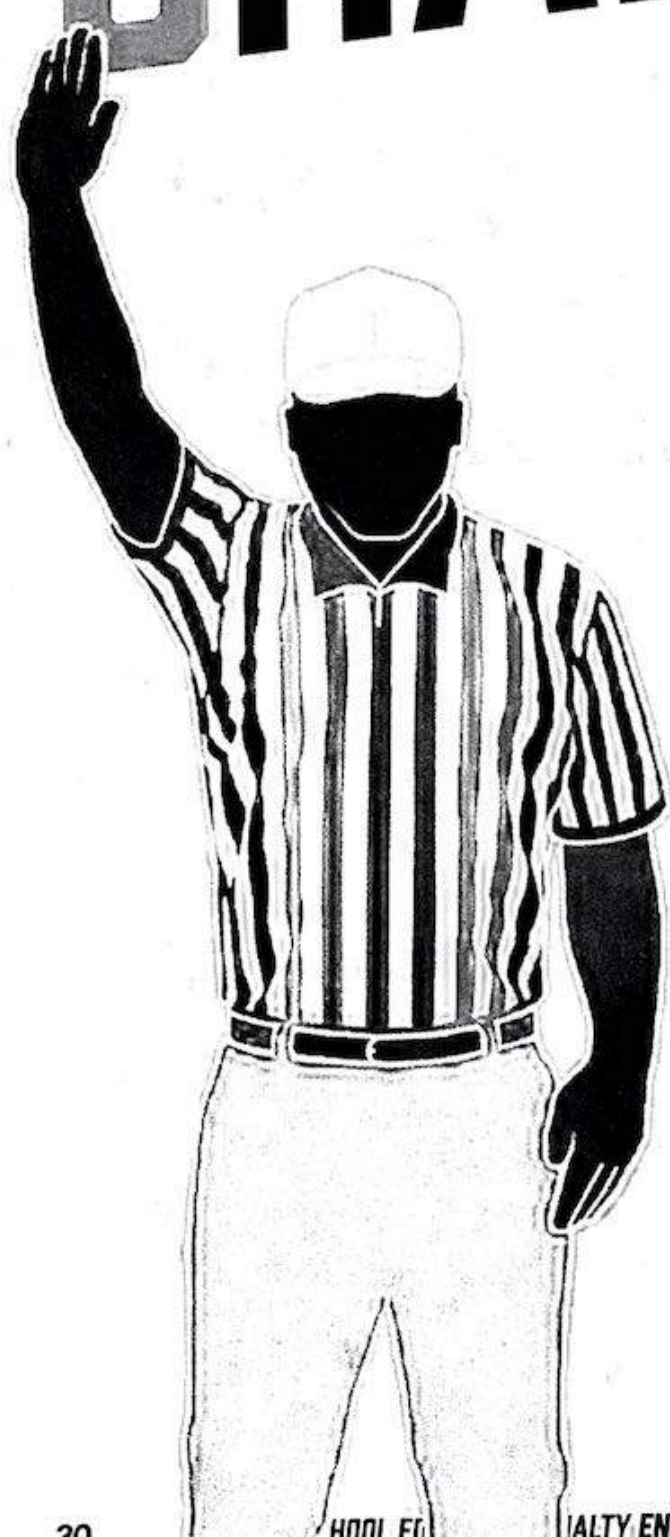
By returning the flag to the referee in the middle of the field, the wing official can keep the referee away from the sideline.



Only the referee should give the signal for ignoring the flag.

# CHAPTER 4

## PENALTY SIGNALING SEQUENCES



0  
-2'0"  
-3'0"  
-4'0"  
5'0"  
4'0"  
3'0"  
2'0"  
1'0"

**T**he order of the penalty signals used by the referee is just as important as the clarity of the signals. Think of signal sequence as words in a sentence. The singular words, "Sequence important the is the of signals," makes little sense when thought of as individual words. But "The sequence of the signals is important," uses the same words and is easy to understand.

The key to quality signaling is remembering it is a sequence of fluid movements. Take your time. Signals executed with separate and distinct motions ensure clarity; jumbled quickly together the messages are lost. Also, remember to wait for the linesman to indicate the chains are in position and the rest of the crew is in place before giving the ready-for-play.

It is also important to face the proper direction when giving the signal. All signals are given facing the press box.

The ready-for-play signal can be the downward stroke of your arm for the start-the-clock signal when the clock starts on the ready.

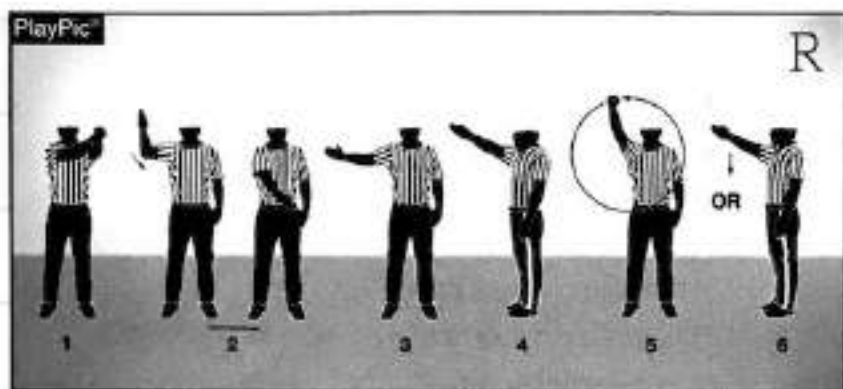
## **SIGNALING LIVE-BALL FOULS**

Signaling the penalty for a run-of-the-mill live-ball foul is a four-step process: foul signal, a point toward the team that fouled, an indication of the next down and either the ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal. Other signals, such as loss of down or an ejection signal, may need to be added. But in most cases, only four signals are needed.

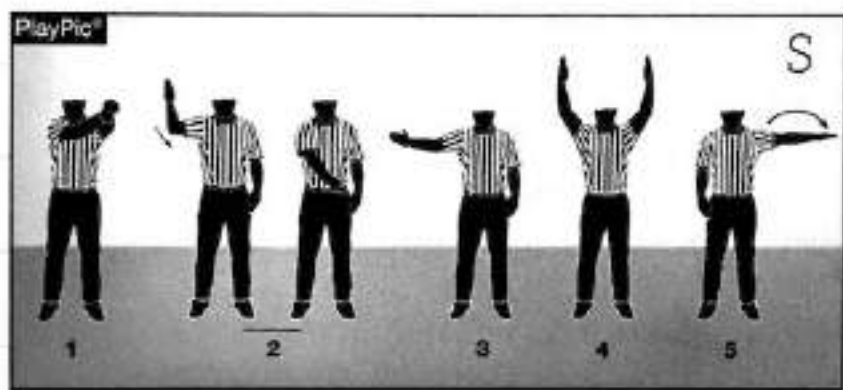
One example of a typical penalty signaling sequence involves roughing the passer. As seen

# CHAPTER 4

in PlayPic R, the referee signals the personal foul (1), signals the nature of the foul (2), indicates which team has fouled (3) and



signals that team A has been awarded a new series (4). The referee waits to be sure the chains have been moved and the other officials are in position. If the pass was complete and the runner was downed inbounds, the referee blows the whistle and simultaneously



gives the start-the-clock signal (5). If the pass was incomplete or the play ended out of bounds, the referee gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing the whistle (6).

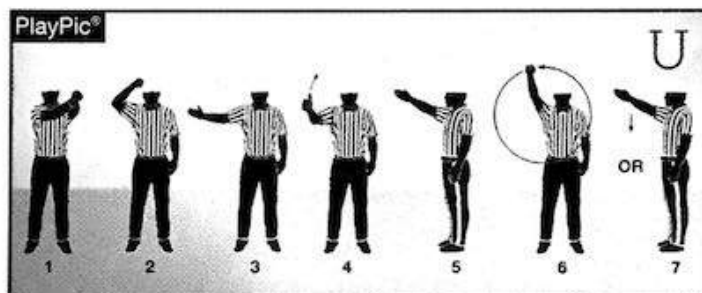
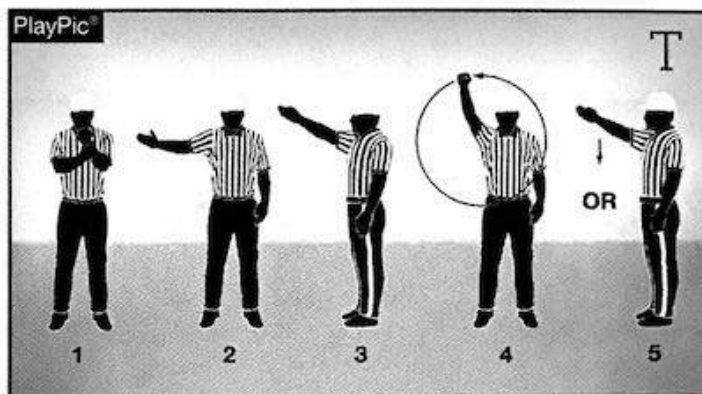
Say team B has been called for roughing the passer but team A scored a touchdown. The scoring team may choose to have the penalty enforced on the try. If so, steps 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the sequence in PlayPic S are used, followed by the ready signal. If the scoring team chooses to have the penalty enforced on the next kickoff, the referee signals the personal foul (1), signals the nature of the foul (2) and indicates which team has fouled (3). The referee signals the



# PENALTY SIGNALING SEQUENCES

touchdown (4), then points to the spot of the next kickoff to indicate the enforcement (5).

In PlayPic T, the defense has been called for holding. The referee first indicates the foul (1), followed by the fouling team (2). If the penalty results in a first down, the referee signals that team A has been awarded a new series (3). If the runner was downed inbounds, the referee blows the whistle and simultaneously gives the start-the-clock signal (4). For an incomplete pass or if the play ended out of bounds, the referee gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing the whistle (5).



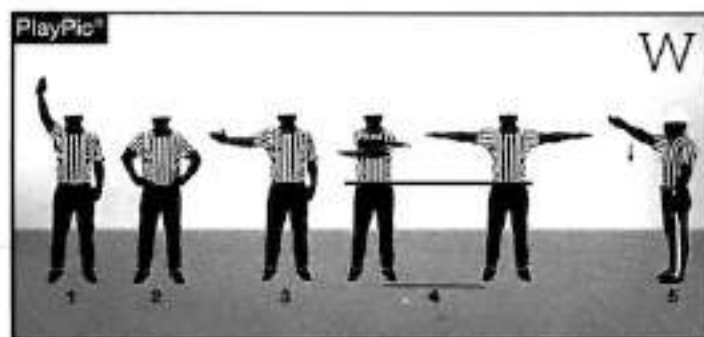
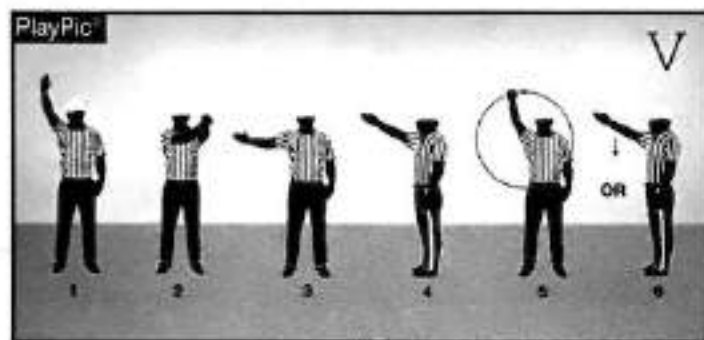
Cases that involve an ejection add a step to the process. The referee must indicate the decision to the press box. PlayPic U illustrates the sequence for a live-ball foul for illegal helmet contact that results in an ejection. The referee first indicates a personal foul (1), the nature of the foul (2) and the fouling team (3). The ejection is then indicated (4). If the penalty results in a first down, the referee signals team A has been awarded a new series (5); if not, the referee signals the next down. In this example, the penalty has given team A sufficient yardage for a first down. If the previous play ended inbounds, the referee blows the whistle and simultaneously gives the start-the-clock signal (6). If the previous play was an incomplete forward pass or

# CHAPTER 4

if the play ended out of bounds, the referee gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing the whistle (7).

## SIGNALING DEAD-BALL FOULS

When a dead-ball foul has been called, the dead-ball



signal must precede the signal for the nature of the foul. That means signaling the penalty is a four- or five-step process: the dead-ball signal, followed by the foul signal, followed by a point toward the team that fouled, followed by an indication of the next down, followed by either the ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal.

In PlayPic V, team B has been flagged for a personal foul that occurred during a dead-ball period. The referee begins with the dead-ball

signal (1), followed by the signal for personal foul (2). He then indicates the team that fouled (3) and signals the next down. If the penalty results in a first down, the referee signals team A has been awarded a new series (4); if not, the referee signals the next down. In this example, the penalty has given team A sufficient yardage for a first down. If the previous play ended inbounds, the referee blows the whistle and simultaneously gives the start-the-clock signal (5). If the previous play was an incomplete forward pass or if the play ended out of bounds, the referee gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing the whistle (6).

# PENALTY SIGNALING SEQUENCES

Penalties for dead-ball fouls are rarely declined because the yardage is "free." However, on those rare occasions when a dead-ball foul is declined, the referee must indicate the declination after indicating which team fouled.

In PlayPic W on page 34, team K is ready to attempt a try but team R has been called for encroachment. Team K declines the penalty because its kicker is more comfortable kicking from the present distance. The referee gives the signals for dead-ball foul (1) and encroachment (2), indicates which team has fouled (3), followed by the declination (4). The referee then gives the ready-for-play while simultaneously blowing the whistle (5).

## STRAIGHTEN UP!

Posture and body language are important elements in officiating, particularly in signaling. There are a few signals (clipping and blocking below the waist come to mind) that necessitate bending at the waist. But the vast majority of signals should be given standing with a straight back.

PlayPic X illustrates one of the most often "bent over" signals — the one for penalty declined. An official using that posture and moving his arms will look silly. Bending over in that manner should be avoided.



Whether signaling a failed kick attempt, an incomplete pass or declination of a penalty, stand up straight. Do not bend at the waist as shown in the PlayPic.

# CHAPTER 5

## ENFORCEMENT SPOTS



**K**nowing what acts are fouls, the penalty yardage for those fouls and the proper signal are all important aspects of the penalty procedure. But all of that knowledge is worthless if you don't know the place from where the penalty is to be enforced.

Before we begin, a quick lesson in nomenclature. There is a distinction between a penalty and a foul. While they are closely related, they are certainly not synonymous. Yet we hear commentators, coaches and sometimes officials using the two words interchangeably.

A foul is an infraction of the rules, while a penalty is the consequence a team suffers for committing such an infraction. We will often hear announcers say, "There is a penalty on the play," when what they really mean is, there is a flag indicating a foul. The yellow flag that we carry probably should be called a "foul flag" rather than a "penalty flag," since we throw it when we see a foul. Whether or not there will be a penalty depends on the decision made by the offended team.

Think of it this way: The "foul" is analogous to a crime, while the "penalty" is the punishment. The "foul" (speeding ticket, say) results in a "penalty" (a fine). Don't get those two confused.

Now that we have that straightened out, here is an explanation of terms that will be used throughout this book. They are elementary to penalty enforcement procedures.

# CHAPTER 5

## STATUS OF THE BALL

In order to properly enforce a penalty, officials must know the status of the ball at the time the foul occurred. There are only two possibilities: It's either a live-ball foul or a dead-ball foul. Dead-ball fouls that prevent the snap (e.g. encroachment, delay of game) are different from dead-ball fouls that occur after the play is over. Unsportsmanlike fouls may occur while the ball is live or while the ball is dead. Whatever the status of the ball, unsportsmanlike fouls are enforced as if they occurred after the play was over.

The ball is dead during the interval between downs. The ball becomes live when the ball has been legally snapped or free kicked and a down is in progress.

When the ball is live, it is either in possession or loose. A loose ball is a pass (forward or backward), a fumble or a kick. Possession is gained when a player controls a snap, catches a pass or kick, recovers a fumble or muff or is handed the ball.

## TYPES OF FOULS

A dead-ball foul occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before the ball again becomes live via a snap or free kick. Conversely, a live-ball foul is one that occurs while a down is in progress. A foul simultaneous with the snap is an act such as illegal motion or illegal formation that becomes a foul when the ball is snapped or free kicked. The ball remains live when a foul simultaneous with the snap occurs.

## HOW TO ENFORCE PENALTIES

Most fouls are player fouls, such as holding, encroachment, grasping the facemask, etc. A player is one of the 22 participants on the field. Other individuals, such as coaches, athletic trainers, substitutes, etc., are non-players. Non-player or unsportsmanlike fouls are non-contact fouls.

When the ball is live, one of two types of plays occurs: a loose-ball play or a running play.

A loose-ball play is action during a free kick or scrimmage kick, a legal forward pass, a backward pass (including the snap), an illegal kick or fumble by team A from in or behind the neutral zone prior to a change of team possession. The run or runs that precedes a legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble is considered part of a loose-ball play. For instance, quarterback A1 drops back to pass but has to scramble before throwing a legal forward pass. A2 is flagged for holding during A1's scramble. That is a loose-ball play because the run preceded a legal pass.

A post-scrimmage kick (PSK) foul is a special kind of loose-ball play and has special enforcement. PSK applies to any foul by team R (other than illegal substitution or participation that occurs at the snap) when the foul occurs before the kick ends during scrimmage-kick plays other than a try or successful field goal.

The foul must occur beyond the neutral zone during a scrimmage-kick play in which the ball crosses the expanded neutral zone (the neutral zone may be expanded up to two yards behind team R's

# CHAPTER 5

line of scrimmage, but it may not expand into the end zone). For PSK to apply, team K would not be next to put the ball into play.

Any other play is considered a running play.

## SPOTS

The previous spot is just what the name implies – it is the point at which the ball was last put into play, either by a snap or a free kick (see Chapter 3). That is a common enforcement spot, so the crew must know where it is. If there is a foul during a play, the chain crew should not move the down marker so the officials can easily locate the previous spot.

The succeeding spot is the point at which the ball will next be put into play either by a snap or a free kick. It is an important spot for penalty enforcement, because we always step off penalties for dead-ball fouls from that spot. The succeeding spot is most often just the dead-ball spot – the yardline where the ball was declared dead on the play just completed. But the succeeding spot might be somewhere else due to the ball having been relocated by a penalty.

The basic spot is a point of reference for penalty enforcement. For a loose-ball play other than PSK situations, the basic spot is the previous spot. The basic spot is the end of the run for a running play that ends beyond the line of scrimmage. The basic spot is the previous spot for a running play that ends behind the line of scrimmage.



# HOW TO ENFORCE PENALTIES

The enforcement spot is the point from which a penalty is enforced.

The dead-ball spot is the spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule.

The post-scrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. Team R retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the post-scrimmage kick spot when a post-scrimmage foul occurs. Fouls by team R behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

The spot where the kick ends applies only to PSK. It is the spot during a punt or field-goal attempt at which a player gets possession or the kick is declared dead. If a team R player catches the kick at team R's 25 yardline, that is the end of the kick. If the ball goes out of bounds, the yardline where it went out of bounds is the end of the kick. If the ball breaks the plane of team R's goalline for a touchback, the end of the kick is team R's 20 yardline.

The spot of the foul is the point at which the foul occurred. Because that is such a common enforcement spot, the official calling a foul should drop the flag as close to that point as possible. When a penalty is enforced from that location, it is called a spot foul.

The spot where a run ends could be any of several places. The most obvious is the point at which a runner is tackled or goes out of bounds, or where the ball is otherwise declared dead in his possession. But there are a number of other places where a run ends. For example, a runner might fumble the ball, throw a backward pass or throw

# CHAPTER 5

an illegal forward pass. The point at which each of those events happens is the end of the run.

Suppose A1 fumbles the ball at his 20 yardline and the ball is recovered at team A's 30 yardline. The running play includes all of the action while A1 had the ball and during the fumble. The running play ended at team A's 30 yardline, while the run ended at team A's 20 yardline.

The same would be true if A1 had thrown a backward pass: The running play would include the action after the ball left his hand until it was caught, recovered or became dead. If the fumble or backward pass were to come into possession of another player, that would be the beginning of another running play. So, there might be several running plays — thus several runs — during any down.

## ENFORCEMENT SPOTS

When a team fouls, determining the enforcement spot depends on the type of play (running play or loose-ball play), where the foul occurred and the result of the play.

In the chapters that follow, you'll find explanations for all of the possible outcomes on a running play:

- A foul by team A behind the line of scrimmage when the play ends behind the line of scrimmage.
- A foul by team A behind the line of scrimmage when the play ends beyond the line of scrimmage.

## HOW TO ENFORCE PENALTIES

- A foul by team A beyond the line of scrimmage when the play ends behind the line of scrimmage.
- A foul by team A beyond the line of scrimmage when the play ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs behind the end of the run or related run.
- A foul by team A beyond the line of scrimmage when the play ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul is in advance of the end of the run or related run.
- A foul by team B behind the line of scrimmage when the play ends behind the line of scrimmage.
- A foul by team B behind the line of scrimmage when the play ends beyond the line of scrimmage.
- A foul by team B beyond the line of scrimmage when the play ends behind the line of scrimmage.
- A foul by team B beyond the line of scrimmage when the play ends beyond the line of scrimmage.

The enforcement spot for on loose-ball plays is also covered.

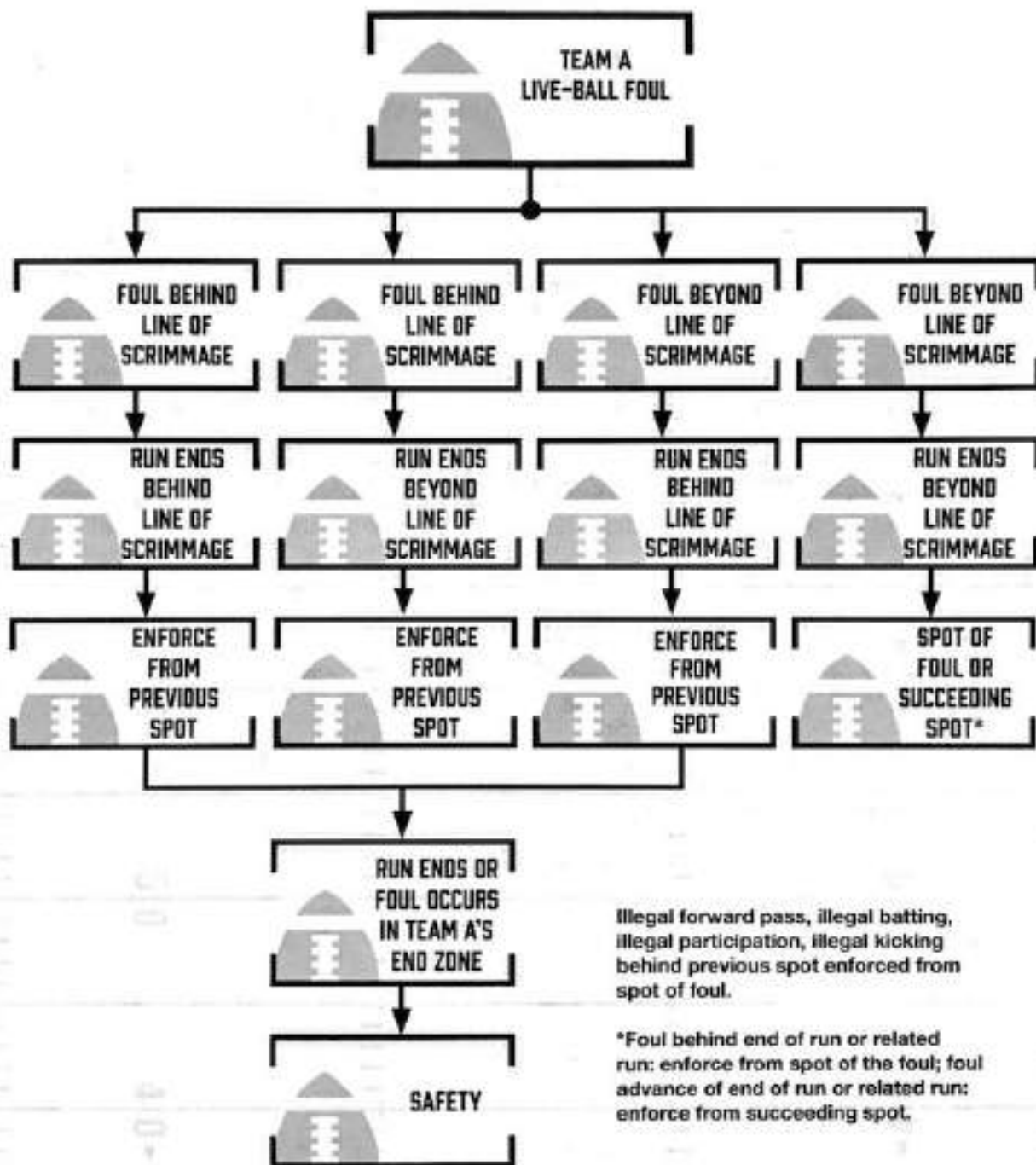
There are special enforcements, such as the aforementioned post-scrimmage kick enforcement, along with enforcement on change-of-possession plays, "bridge" plays (when a penalty may carry over to the next period or overtime), fouls by K on scrimmage kick downs and free kicks downs before the legal kick has ended and scoring plays.

# CHAPTER 6

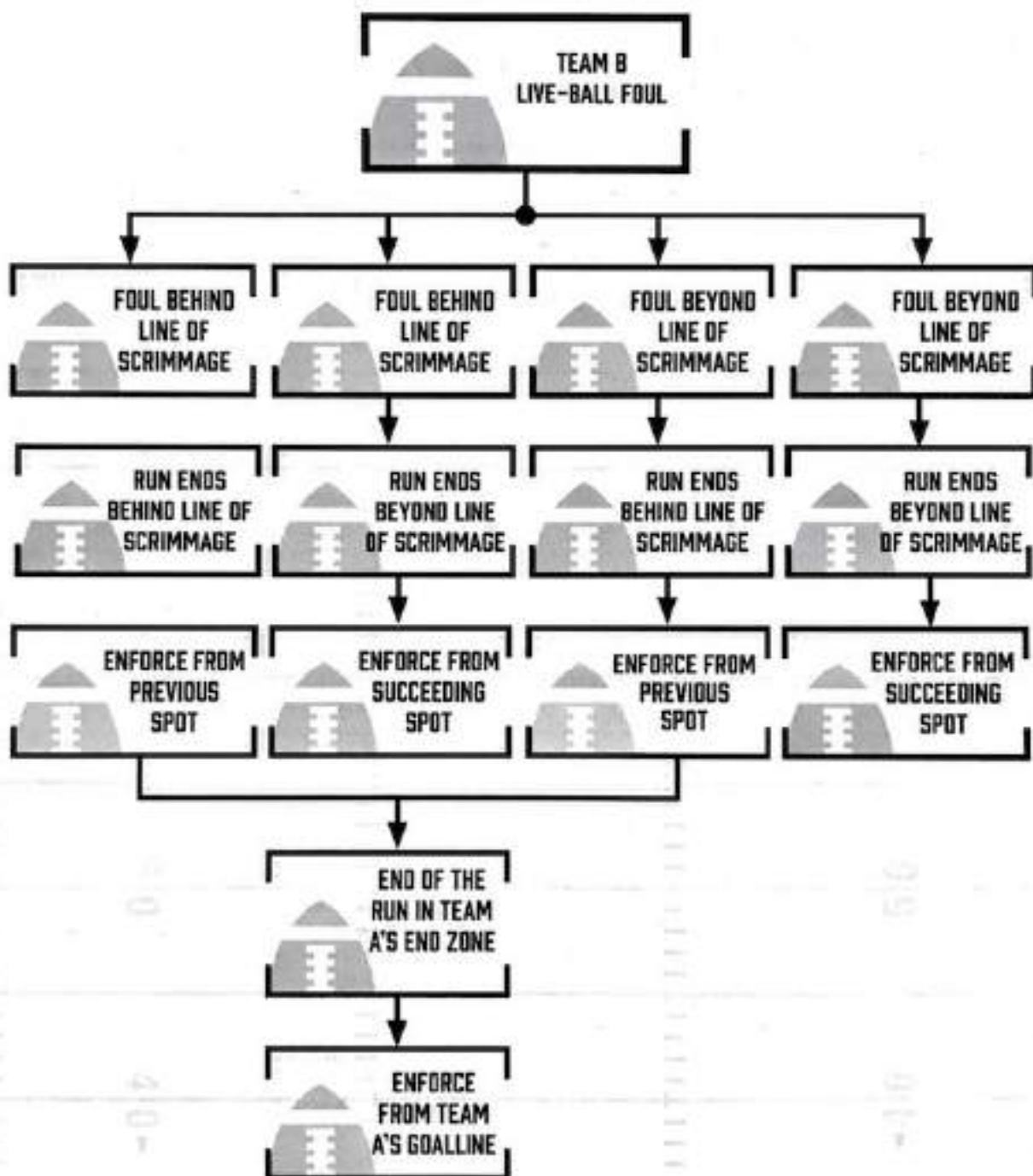
## FOULS ON RUNNING PLAYS



# FOULS ON RUNNING PLAYS



# FOULS ON RUNNING PLAYS



# FOULS ON RUNNING PLAYS

## TEAM A FOULS

On a running play, enforcement of a penalty for a foul by team A depends on the spot of the foul and result of the play.

Penalties for team A fouls for illegal batting, illegal kicking, illegal forward passes and illegal participation are enforced from the spot of the foul.

Other than these special cases, enforcement of a penalty for a foul by team A depends on the spot of the foul and result of the play.

**PLAY 1:** First and 10 at team A's 20 yardline. A1 is downed at team A's 15 yardline. A2 is flagged for holding at team A's 10 yardline.

**RULING 1:** Enforce the penalty from the previous spot. It will be first and 20 from team A's 10 yardline.

If the foul occurred behind the previous spot and the run ends beyond the previous spot, the penalty is enforced from the previous spot.

**PLAY 2:** First and 10 at team A's 20 yardline. A1 carries to team A's 35 yardline. A2 is flagged for holding at team A's 10 yardline.

**RULING 2:** Enforce the penalty from the previous spot. It will be first and 20 from team A's 10 yardline.

If the foul occurred beyond the previous spot and the run ends behind the previous spot, enforce the penalty from the previous spot.

# CHAPTER 6

**PLAY 3:** First and 10 at team A's 20 yardline. A2 is flagged for holding at team A's 30 yardline. A1 is downed at team A's 15 yardline.

**RULING 3:** Enforce the penalty from the previous spot. It will be first and 20 from team A's 10 yardline.

If the foul occurred beyond the previous spot and the run ends beyond the previous spot, the spot of the foul becomes more important.

**PLAY 4:** First and 10 at team A's 20 yardline. A1 carries to team A's 45 yardline. A2 is flagged for holding at (a) team A's 40 yardline, or (b) the 50 yardline.

**RULING 4:** In (a), because the foul occurred behind the end of the run, enforce the penalty from the spot of the foul. It will be first and 10 from team A's 30 yardline. In (b), because the foul occurred beyond the end of the run, the penalty is enforced from the end of the run. It will be first and 10 from team A's 35 yardline.

There is an exception if team A's foul occurs in team A's end zone. In those cases, it is a safety if the penalty is accepted.

**PLAY 5:** First and 10 at team A's 15 yardline. A1 drops back to pass. A2 is flagged for holding (a) in team A's end zone, or (b) at his own 10 yardline. A1 is downed at his own six yardline.

**RULING 5:** In (a), if team B accepts the penalty, it scores a safety. In (b), team B would likely decline the penalty, as it would be enforced half the distance from



## FOULS ON RUNNING PLAYS

the previous spot. In (a) or (b), if team B declines the penalty, it will be second and 19 for team A from its own six yardline.

### ILLEGAL FORWARD PASSES

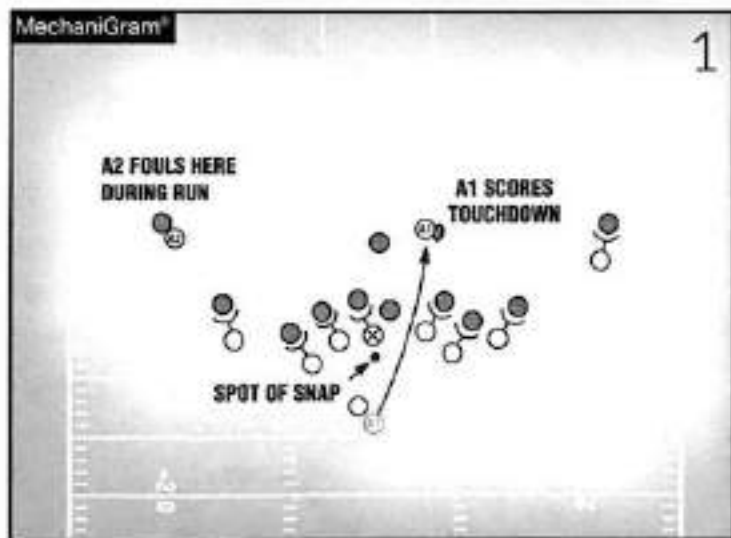
Under NFHS enforcement, illegal forward passes thrown from behind the line are fouls during running plays. Those penalties are enforced from the spot of the pass. The penalty includes a loss of down. If the spot of the pass is in team A's end zone, it is a safety whether or not team B accepts the penalty.

Illegal forward passes thrown beyond the line are also considered running plays. The five-yard penalty is enforced from the spot of the pass and includes a loss of down. The best way to remember that is to give the runner the yardage gained legally before the pass.

Fouls by team A in team B's end zone prior to a touchdown by team A are enforced from the goalline, because the goalline is the end of the run.

**PLAY 6:** As seen in MechaniGram 1, it is first and goal from team B's eight yardline. A1 runs for a touchdown. During the run, A2 is flagged for holding in team B's end zone.

**RULING 6:** The penalty is enforced from team B's goalline. It will be first and goal from team B's 10 yardline.



# CHAPTER 6

## TEAM B FOULS

Unlike team A fouls, enforcement of the penalty for team B fouls depends only on the result of the play.

If the foul occurred behind the line of scrimmage and the run ended behind the line of scrimmage, the penalty is enforced from the previous spot.

**PLAY 7:** First and 10 at team A's 20 yardline. A1 is downed at team A's 15 yardline. B2 is flagged for grasping and twisting A3's facemask at team A's 10 yardline.

**RULING 7:** Enforce the penalty from the previous spot. It will be first and 10 from team A's 35 yardline.

If the foul occurred behind the line of scrimmage and the run ends beyond the line of scrimmage, the penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot.

**PLAY 8:** First and 10 at team A's 20 yardline. A1 carries to team A's 25 yardline. B2 is flagged for grasping and twisting A3's facemask at team A's 10 yardline.

**RULING 8:** Enforce the penalty from the succeeding spot. It will be first and 10 from team A's 40 yardline.

If the foul occurred beyond the line of scrimmage and the run ends behind the line of scrimmage, enforce the penalty from the previous spot.

**PLAY 9:** First and 10 at team A's 20 yardline. A1 is downed at team A's 10 yardline. B1 is flagged for grasping and twisting A3's facemask at team A's 30 yardline.

**RULING 9:** Enforce the penalty from the previous spot. It will be first and 10 from team A's 35 yardline.