

2009 SRI Bulletin #2

Equipment:

Question: (From a Coach) "It was my understanding that skull caps (dew rags, bandanas, etc) worn under the helmet are illegal for safety reasons."

Answer: There is no prohibition against the wearing of bandanas or skull caps. However, the bandana or skull cap must not be visible or protrude from the back of the helmet. Then it becomes a uniform adornment and illegal. Rule 1-5-3k.

False Start:

Play: In a short yardage situation, all offensive players are motionless while the center barks out snap signals using a rapid, staccato-like cadence. Nobody moves, the ball is not snapped and the apparent intent is to cause the defense to encroach to gain a first down.

Ruling: False start on the offense. Rule 7-1-7b. "It is a false start if.....any act is clearly intended to cause B to encroach." The defense does not have to encroach for this to be a penalty on the offense. The "act" is the disconcerting signal calling by the offensive center.

Fumbles and Muffs:

Fumbles are common in football; muffs are less common. Muffs and fumbles are treated differently. Officials must know the definition of touching (Rule 2-44), a muff (Rule 2-27) and possession (Rule 2-34.)

In order to fumble, a player must first have possession of the ball. Mere touching of a loose ball is considered to be a muff, not a fumble. When a fumble occurs, either team can recover or catch the ball and advance it regardless of whether the fumble occurs beyond or behind the LOS. Muffs occur most frequently during kicks and cannot be advanced by the kicking team. The underlying reason for this is not because the ball has been muffed, but because the status of the ball remains a kick.

Remember.....a kick is a kick is a kick.

Play: K1's punt hits the ground at R's 30-yard line and rolls. While the ball is rolling, the ball touches R45 at his 26 yard line. The ball is recovered at R's 24-yard line and advanced for an apparent touchdown by (a) R36 or (b) K15.

Ruling: In (a), a legal play. In (b), since R45 was the first player to touch the kick beyond the LOS, the ball is dead immediately upon recovery by K15; Team K is entitled to possession, and no advance by K15 is allowed. It is K's ball, 1st and 10 on R's 24-yard line.

