

2009 SRI Bulletin #4

Game Balls:

Play: Officials approve the game ball that Quarterback A likes to use. During the contest, QB A is injured and QB Z enters the game and requests a different game ball. Is this permissible with Referee review and approval of the ball?

Ruling: If QB Z's ball is approved by the Referee, there is no problem with using it. A team may offer any legal ball to the Referee for approval at any time during the game. Case Book 1.3.2 Situation C. Where you have a problem is if QB A had started a series of downs with a leather ball, is injured and QB Z's ball is a rubber ball. A leather ball must be used to complete that series of downs.

Line-to-Gain:

Play: A45 gains 17 yards for a first down. A45 then complains to the LJ that he was tackled by the facemask; A45 is flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct. The chains are set **before** enforcement of the dead-ball foul, creating a 1st and 25 situation for Team A. The error is noticed after the ball has been snapped for the next play.

Ruling: Once the ball has been legally snapped, it is too late to correct this error. Had the error been caught prior to the ball being legally snapped, a correction could have been made. Case Book play 5.1.1 Situation B.

Ineligibles Downfield:

Play: QB A8 throws a screen pass which is tipped by an eligible Team A receiver behind the line and falls incomplete beyond the line of scrimmage. When is it applicable to have a foul for ineligibles downfield?

Ruling: A forward pass has gone beyond the NZ if at any time during the pass, the entire ball is beyond the NZ. Rule 2-31-3. Rule 7-5-12 says ineligible A players may not advance beyond the (2-yard) EXPANDED neutral zone. So....if the ineligibles don't go more than 2-yards downfield, there's no penalty. A ball that's tipped behind the LOS probably won't go too far beyond the LOS; I wouldn't have a flag if the tipped ball falls incomplete a yard or two on the ground beyond the NZ. I do think you have to throw the flag if the ineligibles go 5-6 yards downfield and/or the tipped ball goes 3-4 yards in the air beyond the NZ. Bottom line....let's not split hairs on this one and give the defense a cheap 5-yard penalty.

Blocked Kick-Next Down:

Play: Third and 10 at Team A's 10-yard line. A12 punts the ball, the kick is blocked and is recovered by A34 at the A 4-yard line and advanced to the A 15-yard line.

Ruling: Since the kicking team can recover and advance a blocked scrimmage kick behind the LOS, it's 4th and 5 for Team A from the A 15-yard line. The series for Team A did not end because the kick was blocked. If A34's recovery and advance put the ball beyond the line-to-gain, 1st and 10 for Team A at the dead ball spot. However, if this play happened on 4th down, 1st and 10 for Team B at the A 15-yard line as A34's advance did not reach the line-to-gain. Rules 5-1-3a, 5-1-3c and Fundamental VI-2.

Play: Fourth and 10 on Team A's 45-yard line. A17 punts the ball beyond the neutral zone, where B17 muffs the ball back behind the neutral zone where K34 falls on the ball at the A 40-yard line.

Ruling: Since B17 touched the ball beyond the neutral zone, it will be first down for the team in possession at the end of the down. Team A's ball, 1st and 10 at the A 40-yard line. Rule 5-1-3f.