

2012 SRI Bulletin 3

Helmet Coming Off

This play was observed in a college game, but it could also happen at a high school game.

During a fourth down punt play, player A76's helmet came off. He went off the field and on came Team A's defensive players. The defense also had a player who is #76. With mass substitutions, does anyone notice that this team had two players with the same number?

A team may have players with identical numbers. The only prohibition is that players may not participate during the same down while wearing identical numbers. Rule 7-2-5c.

Let's make sure that a "player" leaves for one play and not just a "number."

Illegal Formation

Question: "Can linemen can line up in this formation...center over the ball, guards with their helmets through the center's waistline and tackles with their helmets at the waist of the guards to form a horseshoe shape?"

Answer: The position of the tackles causes the formation to be illegal. The guards are OK if their heads break the plane through the snapper's waist. Since the tackle's helmets only break the plane through the waist of the guards and not the snapper, they are too far back off the line of scrimmage. Rule 2-32-9.

Kickoff Mechanics

From a Referee:

"Team K is ready to kickoff to Team R. I am back on the goal line waiting for the kicker to signal that he is ready by raising his hand. I stand there for half a minute or so and nothing happens. The kicker finally approaches the ball and kicks, but I have yet to blow the ready. We go back and try it again. Once again, I do not see the kicker raise his hand. As it turns out, Team K uses a system where one of the other players along K's free kick line is the one raising his hand, not the kicker. Back on the goal line, I do not see this other player raise his hand because he is partially obscured by all of the other players (both K and R) and he is almost 60 yards away. Your thoughts?"

My Response:

The Oregon Mechanics and Philosophies Manual tells us that the Back Judge or Linesman in a 4-person crew "should remind the kicker not to kick the ball until the Referee has sounded his whistle." I think most BJ's and L's also tell the kicker to raise his hand when he is ready, but there is no requirement that the kicker do so. The Referee should not delay the ready-for-play to wait for the kicker to raise his hand.

Once the Referee sees a “ready” signal from each official he should blow his whistle and make the ball ready-for-play whether or not the kicker has raised his hand. The kicker must then kick the ball within 25-seconds or be penalized for delay of game. Rule 3-6-2a. Officials must also do their best to keep the interval between a score and the succeeding free kick to 1-minute. Rule 3-5-7l.

Free Kick Out of Bounds

Play: On a free kick, R10 thinks the rolling ball will break the goal line plane, so he make no effort at recovery. The ball stops rolling near the sideline on the R-2. Alert K6 recovers the ball, but has one foot on the sideline.

Ruling: Rule 2-29-1...a player is out of bounds when any part of that person...is touching....anything that is on...the sideline. K6 is out of bounds. When K6 recovers the ball he is in player possession, Rule 2-34-1. A ball in possession of a player who is out of bounds causes the ball to be out of bounds. Rule 2-29-3. Bottom line, K6 has caused the ball to go out of bounds untouched by R. Rule 6-1-8c applies.

False Start by Snapper

I am hearing about snappers that move their head up and down in a jerky manner to draw the defense into the neutral zone. This usually happens on 3rd or 4th down with less than 5 yards to make a first down. This action is not part of a normal snapping movement. When in a shotgun or scrimmage kick formation, the snapper may look between his legs at the quarterback or punter, then raise his head prior to snapping the ball as long as all of this is done smoothly and not intended to simulate the start of a play.

In other words, “if we don’t let the guard and tackle do it, then we’re not going to let the snapper do it.” When in question, any abrupt or quick movement by the snapper is a false start.

Training Videos

There are two training videos this week.

The first video is 5 different plays showing horse collar tackles, a false start, reverse goal line mechanics and excellent Line Judge/Back Judge sideline/goal line mechanics.

The second video is another in the LeMonnier series and deals with fumbles vs. the ball being down.