

## **2012 SRI Bulletin 4**

### **Holder Protection**

Play: Team A has scored a touchdown and is in place kick formation for an extra point attempt. The snap goes over the holder's head. The holder partially rises in an effort to catch the errant snap, which is controlled in the air by a leaping kicker. The holder - still partially standing and facing backwards - yells at the kicker to run. He (the holder) then finishes rising and begins to turn forwards. Just as he finishes that motion, he is struck with a legal block by B1.

When does holder protection end?

Ruling: Rule 2-32-7 defines a holder. By that definition, a holder ceases to be a holder when he no longer "controls the ball on the ground....." So...in the above play, when the snap is errant, the holder is now a player.

In this play, did B1 continue his path into the holder/player, or did he try to avoid contacting the holder/player? If he makes any effort to avoid contact, I'd pass on throwing the flag. Also, look at Rule 9-4-5a which talks about unavoidable contact when it's not certain that a kick will be made. You say the (legal) contact occurred after the holder/player "finished rising and began to turn forward." That tells me he has regained his balance and is starting to move to participate in the (remainder of) the play as a player because as noted, he's no longer a holder. If he's legally blocked, I don't think there is a foul.

Now....the other side of the coin. If you judge the block on this player to be unnecessary and unduly rough, or if he's totally out of (away from) the play, you can flag the blocker for a personal foul per Rule 9-4-3b or g. Bottom line, this is a judgment call all the way!

### **Hurdling**

Play: During a PAT by placekick, a defensive player 5-6 yards off the line of scrimmage runs towards the LOS and leaps over the snapper in an attempt to block the PAT kick.

Ruling: Assuming the snapper has no more than one or both feet on the ground, this is a foul for hurdling. Rules 2-22 and 9-4-3d. Point of Emphasis for 2012. Rule Book page 85.

### **Penalty Enforcement**

Play: Team A's ball, fourth and 10 from 50 yard line. Team A's punt is rolling near Team B's end zone. B29 picks up the punted ball and returns 95-yards for a touchdown. During the return, his teammate, B52 leaves the team box and moves onto the playing field to encourage B29. B52 does not interfere with the play. The trailing official throws a flag.

Ruling: This is illegal substitution and also a non-player foul. Rule 3-7-6. Rule 8-2-4 tells us that non-player fouls that occur during a down in which a touchdown is scored may be enforced either on the try or the succeeding kickoff.

## **Illegal Formation**

Question, from an Official:

Rule 7-2-1 violations are happening with many hurry up/no huddle offenses. The wide receivers are not coming inside the 9-yard marks momentarily after the ready before the snap. When I bring this up to others in my association, they say, if the receiver is covered/defended by a defensive player, we shouldn't call it. These receivers always seem to be defended and it's not a case of the 11th player slipping on the field before the snap. Plus, it's a rule and I don't think we have authority to not call it.

My Response:

The accepted officiating practice is to not throw the flag when a wide receiver is covered/acknowledged by a defensive player. Since any chance of a "hide out" or deceptive play has been eliminated, there's a philosophy of "no harm, no foul." I'd do a lot of reminding and preventive officiating with the wide receiver in question before throwing the flag.

## **Ball Approval**

Question....from an Official:

There seems to be inconsistency surrounding the idea of a "kicking ball." If we only approve balls that a team is willing to play with on any down then we don't need to worry about when and how often they rotate a ball because it will be an "any down" approved ball. However I don't really care what the philosophy is as long as it is consistent. If we allow a ragged slick kicking ball on free kicks and 4th downs than that's fine as long as some of us aren't saying yes one week and others are saying no the next week.

My Response:

At the high school level, it's impractical/impossible to require teams to present their game balls to the officials for inspection prior to the game. So...we're stuck with having to "inspect" balls on the field.

Most teams practice with their game balls; they don't have enough balls to separate game balls from practice balls. Also, balls are usually under the control of youth ball persons, not coaches, not adults, which means little or no quality control over which balls are used for what play.

The only thing officials can do is put a mark on the game balls when they inspect them; any ball that's "slick" doesn't get marked and any ball that doesn't have a mark doesn't get used, whether it's 2nd or 4th down.

Bottom line....officials have to mark acceptable balls and consistently use only marked balls.

## **Training Videos**

Two training videos are posted for this week. The first features plays involving spearing, false starts and DPI. The second is another in the LeMonnier series featuring goal line/pylon situations.