

2012 SRI Bulletin 6

Illegal Substitution:

Play: Team B is in half of a huddle. The lineman and linebackers are somewhat huddled up but the defensive backs and safety are staying close to their normal positions. B12 enters as a substitute and no one leaves within 3 seconds. As Team A breaks their huddle, B11 realizes he should have left and starts toward his sideline and gets off the field before the center snaps the ball. A flag was thrown for a dead ball Illegal Substitution foul against Team B because the replaced player took more than 3 seconds to leave.

Ruling: Correct call. Rule 3-7-1 applies to both offensive and defensive players. Please also look at Case Book plays 3.7.1 Situations A and B.

Line to Gain/New Series:

Play: 4th and 5 on K's 30. K10's punt is shanked and comes down near the LOS. R78, with his feet just a few inches on his side of the NZ, reaches into the NZ to catch the punt but muffs the ball. The ball, partly into the NZ but none of it on R's side when R78 touched it, bounces back to K's 28, where a prone K34 recovers it. Whose ball?

Ruling: The critical question to ask is, "was the ball touched by R BEYOND the neutral zone?" In your play the ball was touched "partly into the NZ." That's not beyond. Therefore, R has not touched the ball beyond the NZ. The ball remains alive until "prone K2 recovers it." R's ball, 1st and 10 at the dead ball spot as K has failed to make the line-to-gain. Rule 5-1-4.

Illegal Forward Pass:

Play: Quarterback is scrambling, goes across the LOS, comes back behind the LOS, and throws a pass that is completed to a teammate. Legal play or not?

Ruling: Rule 7-5-2b says a forward pass is illegal if thrown from BEYOND the NZ. So....it does not matter if a passer/runner advances the ball BEYOND the NZ and then returns BEHIND it and throws a pass. As long as he's BEHIND the NZ when he throws, he's legal. Take it one step farther...it's also a legal pass if a runner advances beyond the NZ and throws the ball back to a teammate who is behind the NZ and the teammate throws a forward pass downfield.

Test Review:

The next two Bulletins will review the 4 most missed test questions by Oregon football officials.

The most missed question (45.27%) on this year's rules test was: True or False....If end A1 accidentally goes OB and returns during the down, he becomes an ineligible pass receiver. The correct answer is FALSE. This question tests your reading skills! A1 maintains his eligibility throughout the down, Rule 7-5-6d, but is guilty of illegal participation when he returns to the field of play, regardless if he participates in the play or not. Rule 9-6-1. One other thing....if A1 is blocked OB by an opponent, he must return inbounds at the first opportunity to avoid a penalty.

The second most missed question (44.60%) was: True or False....A clock stopped during a period for an official's time out will start with the ready-for-play signal with the only exception being when a free kick follows. The correct answer is FALSE. The trick word in the question is "only." The other exception is when Team B is awarded a new series. Rules 3-4-2a and 3-4-3.

Timing Issues:

I am hearing the following involving officials from around the state. Please take note.

- A running clock is not an option AT ANY LEVEL of 6A competition.
- Requests for shortening quarters must always come from one or both coaches. This conversation should NEVER be initiated by officials. Rule 3-1-3.
- Some officials are allowing (or directing) clock operators to shorten the mandatory 3-minute halftime warm-up if both teams are ready to play. This is not permitted by rule. By agreement of both coaches, the halftime intermission may be shortened to a minimum of 10 minutes, but the 3-minute warm-up period is mandatory AT ALL LEVELS. Table 3-1, Rule Book, page 39.

Consuming Time:

Play: With no-time-outs remaining, the clock running and fourth down with 40 seconds to go in the third period, K is preparing to punt into a very strong wind. With 20 seconds remaining, K78 commits a false start. When should the clock start?

Ruling: Penalize Team K 5-yards and start the clock with the snap. Under normal circumstances, the clock would start with the ready-for-play signal, but this would permit the period to end and Team K could then punt with the wind. Team K will not be permitted to gain this advantage by committing a foul to consume time. Rule 3-4-6.

Mid-Season Kudos:

We have reached the middle of the 2012 regular season. Brad and I want to compliment all of you on the job you are doing on the field. We have not received a lot of comments or criticisms. Some issues and concerns that we have heard about have been addressed in these weekly bulletins. Keep up the good work; games take on new significance as the season progresses. Let's work to be consistent with our rules knowledge and interpretations and our mechanics.

Training Video:

This week's training video is from the 2012 Aloha Football Clinic sponsored by the Hawaii Football Officials Association. This video features 16 plays that discuss Blocking and Holding. Other Aloha Clinic videos are available for viewing at: <http://refereeclinic.com/videos>