

THE KICKING GAME

LEGAL KICK: A punt, a drop kick, or a place kick – the term legal involves when and where and how the kick is executed.

FREE KICKS: (A free kick down does not involve a snap.)

- **Kickoff** – Usually from K's 40 and there is a 10 yd. neutral zone. You cannot use a punt for a kickoff. (Ask about the tee.)
- **Following a safety** – Usually from K's 20 and has a 10 yd. neutral zone. You can use a punt or a place kick or a drop kick. (Yes, you can on-side kick following a safety.)
- **K may recover** (but NOT advance) a free kick if R has touched it OR if the kick has touched the ground AND broken the plane of R's free kick line (in either order).
- **Protect the kicker** – No one may block the kicker until the ball touches the ground or it touches R OR the kicker advances 5 yards beyond his kick line. (15 yd penalty for an illegal block enforced from the previous spot and a re-kick).
- **Free kick out of bounds** – DID R EVER TOUCH THE KICK??? Must know this!!!
 - **4 options:**
 - 5 yard penalty and re-kick.
 - R's ball 25 yards from K.O. spot (at the hash mark).
 - Refuse the penalty and take the result of the play.
 - 5 yard penalty from the dead ball spot (succeeding spot)
- **PSK does not exist** on free kicks so all penalties during the kick are from the previous spot except for kick-catching interference (15 yard penalty and re-kick or an awarded fair catch following a 15 yard penalty from the spot of the foul) – New 2018 change allows for a foul during the kick by K can be enforced from the dead ball spot (succeeding spot) if K will not put the ball in play next. (tacked onto the end of the play)
- **Fair catch is possible** (Very SLOW, deliberate whistle on fair catches).
- **TOUCHBACK IF THE BALL IN KICK STATUS BREAKS R's GOALINE PLANE!!!**
- **R may advance any free kick in the field of play unless a valid or invalid signal has been given by any R player but DO NOT let K advance any free kick !!!**
- **At least 10 K players must be less than 5 yards from their free kick line at the 'ready' AND at least 4 K players must be on each side of the football at the time of the kick.**

SCRIMMAGE KICKS: (The down must start with a legal snap.)

- Legal kick by K in or behind the neutral zone during a scrimmage down.
- Illegal kick – incorrect method or incorrect location of the kick and the ball retains the same status as it was prior to the kick. (15 yard penalty from the spot of the kick.)
- Protect the snapper on any down that a scrimmage kick formation is used.
- R may advance any scrimmage kick in the field of play unless a valid or invalid signal has been given by any R player.
- Any scrimmage kick that goes out of bounds in kick status always belongs to R.
- A scrimmage kick possessed BEHIND the neutral zone can be advanced by all 22 players, or K can still throw a forward pass or K can even kick the ball again.
- A scrimmage kick possessed BEYOND the neutral zone can be advanced by R only. (K can gain possession if R has touched the kick but K cannot advance.)
- An unsuccessful field goal is treated exactly the same as a punt in terms of the scrimmage kick rules.
- FOULS by K enforced from the previous spot except for kick-catching interference. (Options for kick-catching interference are a 15 yd penalty and replay the down or an awarded fair catch 15 yards from the spot of the foul or decline the penalty.) – New 2018 change allows for a foul during the kick by K can be enforced from the dead ball spot (succeeding spot) if K will not put the ball in play next (tacked onto the end of the play).
- FOULS by R from the previous spot UNLESS they are POST SCRIMMAGE KICK enforcement fouls.
 - 1.) Foul by R occurs between the snap and the end of the kick AND occurs beyond the expanded neutral zone.
 - 2.) Kick must cross the expanded neutral zone.
 - 3.) The ball must belong to R at the end of the down.
 - 4.) PSK does not apply on a try or on a successful field goal.
- Protect the kicker/holder – Running into (5 yds) vs. Roughing (15 yds plus automatic 1st down)
- Fair catch (Valid or Invalid) – If any member of R signals, no member of R may advance. (Valid indicates “HOW” and “WHEN” the signal is given.)

GENERAL RULES:

- R must be given an unhindered opportunity to catch the kick regardless of whether a fair catch is signaled or not.
 - 1st touching – K touches a kick when they are not entitled to possess the kick.
 - **THE KICK ENDS and the play is over** (blow your whistle and stop the clock) **if:**
 - 1.) The kick breaks the plane of R's goal line.
 - 2.) Kick goes out of bounds. (It belongs to R.)
 - 3.) R gains possession following a fair catch signal.
 - 4.) K gains possession **beyond** the neutral zone on a scrimmage kick.
 - 5.) Kick dies with no one in possession.
 - 6.) Simultaneous possession.
- *** ALWAYS be alert for a fair catch signal and use a SLOW, DELIBERATE whistle!!!
Remember that R loses his fair catch protection if he muffs the kick.
- *** You must also be alert for the momentum exception that could occur near R's goal line plane inside the 5 yard line.