

2014 Football Bulletin VIII

Oct. 9, 2014

To: Commissioners, Board Interpreters, Curriculum reps, CIAC and league reps, and media.

From: Bill Riccio, Jr. State Interpreter

Re: Plays of interest

I. SHOK

- A. Any football official who has five minutes of experience has heard the anagram SHOK (S... happens on kicks). It's about 18 percent of the game and most of the headaches. Here's a play that came up last week:

K 4/7 from its own 30. K3 takes the ball and goes around the right side, kicking the ball six yards beyond the neutral zone. Ruling: If the penalty is accepted it is enforced from the spot of the kick, 15 yards, and re-play the down.

The kick is treated as a fumble and the play is allowed to continue under NFHS rules. If you have the NFHS Study Guide, these situations are covered exhaustively.

Note: For those working Prep School games using NCAA rules. This would be killed at the time of the kick, with the penalty enforced at the previous spot, 5-yards and loss of down.

- B. Team K punts from its own 40. The ball never crosses the neutral zone and is touched by R behind the line of scrimmage, and K falls on the ball, ending the down. Ruling: 1/10 for R at the dead-ball spot.

The touch is not a factor in the play. All rules having to do with scrimmage kicks and touching by either team are specific when the touching is "beyond" the neutral zone. But we even have to add a principle to this. It must go beyond and STAY beyond the neutral zone. As

we know if the ball bounces back behind the neutral zone either team can pick it up and advance it.

So, let's extrapolate: if the ball goes beyond the zone and kicks back behind and the same thing happens (R touches the ball behind the zone) the touching is ignored as if the ball never crossed. This is because under Federation rules the ball in relation to the neutral zone is the determining factor, not whether the ball crossed or not.

Now, if the ball was touched BEYOND the neutral zone by R and recovered by K, they get a new series of downs regardless of whether they reach the line to gain or not. Please review the casebook plays on this. CASEBOOK 6.2.3 Situation A COMMENT

- C. Kick Mechanics – Though it's the mid-way point, and Referees are doing their darnedest to keep pre-games interesting, keep reviewing mechanics on punt plays – particularly who is secondary on fair catches and plays in front of the receivers. Line Judges are drifting downfield and have to watch the gunners and the action in front of the receivers. Line Judges and Head Linesmen have to be alert for quick fair catch signals. Wings shouldn't rush downfield, but drift so that the play is boxed in. Getting down there in a rush could mean you've hustled yourself right out of position.

Suggestion: This is being used in seven-man games and could work in five-man games. On snaps over the punters head (or the QB's head in pistol or shotgun) the wing that is facing the Referee should come back, while the opposite wing stays at home. It keeps the play boxed in, and doesn't displace too many officials. We really don't need three officials deep behind the LOS.

- D. There still is confusion on starting and stopping the clock when a kick (punt or place kick) is involved. As long as the kick is a legal one, the clock always starts on the snap regardless of whether K gets the ball back with a new set of downs.

Play 1: K 4/4 from the K-40. K3's punt is blocked and stays behind the neutral zone. The loose ball is picked up by K67 who runs to the K-35. Ruling: K 1/10 at the K-35. Start the clock on the snap (legal kick play).

Play 2: K 4/4 from the K-40. K3's punt is partially blocked and goes beyond the neutral zone and rebounds back behind untouched by R. K67 picks up the loose ball and runs to the K-35. Ruling: K 1/10 at the K-35. Start the clock on the snap (legal kick play).

Play 3: K 4/4 from the K-40. K3's punt goes beyond the neutral zone and is touched by R44 and rebounds behind the line, where K67 picks up the loose ball. Ruling: Regardless of where the play ends up, it is a new series of downs for K with the clock starting on the snap (legal kick play).

You can add to the above examples, but the principle is the same: As long as the kick is legal, the clock starts on the snap.

II. Various plays and enforcements

A. Review the penalty enforcement for dead-ball fouls after a first down is established, but before the Ready for Play.

Play 1: A 2/13 from the B-40. There is a late-hit by B44, A17 retaliates. Ruling: Penalize in the order of occurrence. This gives A 1/10 at the B-25, then we move the ball back to the B-40 for A17's foul. Everything moves back including the chains A 1/10 from the A-40. **5-3-1.**

Play 2: A2/13 from the B-40. A17 runs for an apparent first down at the B-25. There is a late hit by A67. Ruling: A 1/10 at the B-40. **5-3-1.**

Note: As long as the fouls are enforced prior to the Ready for Play, the down and distance is 1/10, not 1/25.

B. Mechanically, we had a question regarding an enforcement that could either result in a first down or be just short of a first down. Let's say you have (for example) a second down situation and the ball is either just beyond the tape on the chain or just short of it. Beyond the tape (which is put at the 5-yard mark on the chain), means we have a first down; short of it, and we're going to be short of the first down.

Have the Referee go over to the down box and measure from there. If it's beyond, he signals first down. The U then enforces with the other officials. If it's short, bring the chain in and set the ball up. It looks like a million and we gain a lot of credibility.

III. Concussions

A. Stay out of the mix – The NFHS has rewritten rules to keep officials out of the concussion diagnosis. There are guidelines in the rule book and case book as to what to look for in the case of a possible concussion.

Curriculum chairmen should have at least a review once or twice a year concerning this – and we all do. Here are some things to do and not do in the case a player is showing signs:

1. **Do have the player evaluated.** "Evaluated" is our operative word. If an official sees signs of concussion, he should say to the head coach, "Coach have number..... evaluated. Then get him off the field.
2. **Don't give an opinion.** Officials should not say, "I think he has a concussion," or anything equivalent to it.
3. **Don't get involved if the player comes back after one play or later in the game.** This is not our concern. The rules are designed so we are out of the decision-making process. If the player comes back into the game, we assume he's been cleared to play. If he shows signs, we again go through the steps above.

Comment: Our only role in assessing concussions is knowing the signs, and getting the player evaluated. Even if you have an MD, stay out of the mix. People a lot smarter than we are have developed these guidelines.

Finally, some teams have drones hovering over the field. Like I said early in the year, if it doesn't have a smart-bomb attached to it, I don't care and neither should anyone else. There is nothing covering drones.

I know this is a bit long, but these are some of the discussions that came up.

Bill R.