



Football Fundamentals

- The game of Football has some of the most intricate and difficult rules of any sport that we officiate
- The rules have exceptions and exceptions to those exceptions
- However, there are basic Fundamental statements that apply across the rule book

Football Fundamentals

- These statements are ALWAYS true in High School Football
- Learning these basics will prepare you for the field of play
 - Knowing these will help you and your crew do what we are out there to do

GET THE CALL RIGHT

Football Fundamentals

- The following presentation will attempt to explain the Fundamentals of High School Football
- Fundamental Statements are found on page 82-83 of the 2017 NFHS Football Rules Book
- Please consult Rule 2(pg 24-38) for definition of terms

Status of the Ball

- The ball is either alive or dead
- The ball becomes ALIVE by one of the following ONLY:
 - Snap
 - Free Kick

Status of the Ball

- The ball becomes DEAD due to action of the play
 - Incomplete Pass
 - Runner Out of Bounds
 - Runner is down by a body part other than the hand or foot touching the ground
 - Touchdown, Touchback or Safety

Status of the Ball

- Only an Inadvertent Whistle causes the ball to become dead
- The action of the play has already caused the ball to become dead
- NO FOUL causes a live ball to become dead
- Catching ALWAYS is preceded by touching
 - So if touching causes the ball to become dead-catching has no significance

Kicks

- Any kick can be advanced by the receivers(R) unless a valid or invalid fair catch signal has been given
- If a legal fair catch is given:
 - On a Free Kick in or beyond the NZ
 - On a Scrimmage Kick beyond the NZ

THE BALL IS DEAD WHEN POSSESSED
BY R OR K

Kicks

- Any KICK that is not a scoring attempt is DEAD when the ball breaks the Goal Line of R

Kicks-Batting

- Batting of any kick is illegal UNLESS:
 - R
 - Can bat a kick in or behind the NZ in an attempt to block
 - K
 - Can bat toward their goal line
 - Any grounded kick
 - Any kick not grounded if no R player is in position to catch the kick

Free Kicks

- One of the ways the ball becomes alive is through a Free Kick (otherwise known as a kickoff)
- Only a Free Kick after a Fair Catch can score points
- Free Kick Lines
 - These are the lines that the teams must remain behind until the ball is alive
 - These lines are ALWAYS 10 yds apart

Free Kicks

- The Free Kick ends when
 - Possession is gained
 - Kick is OOB
 - Kick is Touchback
- ANY foul that occurs during the kick can result in a rekick
- Fouls by both teams during the play will require a rekick
- ANY foul that occurs after the kick ends does not allow for a rekick

Free Kick

- First touching of a Free Kick by K must be marked as it is a penalty enforcement spot
- First touching is disregarded if:
 - ANY foul is accepted on the play
- ANY R player may signal a Fair Catch:
 - After the ball is alive
 - Before the kick ends
 - The R player is in or beyond the Neutral Zone

Scrimmage Kicks

- A Scrimmage Kick is any kick not a free kick(Punt, Field Goal or Try)
- A Scrimmage Kick recovered by either team behind the Line of Scrimmage can be advanced by EITHER team(not a try)
- Touching of a low Scrimmage Kick by R is ignored at the Line of Scrimmage
- If the ball is beyond the Line of Scrimmage and touched by R, then the team in possession at the end of the down receives a new series(unless K fouls before the kick, or there was an inadvertent whistle)

Downs

- Teams are given 4 downs(Series) to reach the Line to Gain(LTG)
- No series can begin on any down other than first
- The down begins when the ball becomes alive(SNAP)
- The down ends when the ball becomes dead

Downs

- After play has ceased and you account for any action on the play(including penalties) you THEN determine if the LTG was reached
- Dead Ball fouls do not account in determining LTG on 4th down or change of possession plays

Downs

- There are only 4 Automatic First Down Fouls
 - Roughing the Passer
 - Roughing the Kicker
 - Roughing the Snapper
 - Roughing the Holder

Downs

- There are only three fouls that cause the loss of the right to replay the down
 - Illegal Forward Pass
 - Illegal Handing of the Ball Forward
 - Intentional Grounding
 - Illegal Touching by Ineligible Receiver

Downs

- If a penalty is accepted during the last play of a quarter, the quarter is extended for one untimed down unless:
 - The foul includes a loss of down
 - Penalties administered as Dead Ball Fouls
 - Unsportsmanlike Fouls
 - Dead Ball Fouls
 - Nonplayer Fouls
 - Fouls that specify a safety by rule as enforcement
 - Fouls enforced on a subsequent kickoff

Possession

- A Live Ball is ALWAYS in Team Possession
 - Loose balls remain in possession of team that last had possession
- A Live Ball is either in possession or loose
 - A player who has possession of a live ball is a RUNNER
 - A runner CANNOT fumble before he has possession of the ball

Possession-Fouls

- No fouls causes loss of possession of the ball
- After a distance penalty:
 - The ball belongs to the team in possession before the penalty
 - Team possession may change if a new series is awarded
- Possession of a Live Ball in the Opponents Endzone is ALWAYS A TOUCHDOWN

Blocking

- Blocking is permissible in Football unless:
 - Kick Catching Interference
 - Illegal Blocks
 - Pass Interference
 - Personal Foul

Plays

- There are two types of plays
 - Loose Ball Plays are plays that have:
 - A fumble
 - A pass(forward or backward)
 - A kick(legal or illegal)
 - Any action that preceded any of the above
 - Running Plays are:
 - Any play that is not a loose ball

Plays-Legal Forward Passes

- Any Player eligible to receive a pass at the beginning of the down, remains eligible throughout the down
 - Any back
 - The players on the end of the LOS
 - Either must be numbered 1-49 or 80-99
- Interior Linemen are not allowed to advance beyond the NZ until the forward pass is in flight

Plays-Legal Forward Passes

- A handed ball is not a pass
- Pass Interference can only occur BEYOND the NZ
- Any pass can be batted in any direction by an eligible receiver
 - Exception is a backward pass batted forward by the passing team

Fouls

- No live ball foul causes the Official to sound his whistle
 - Dead Ball Fouls do require a whistle to prevent the play from becoming alive or to notify the Referee of a foul
- A live ball foul cannot be paired with a dead ball foul to create a double foul

Fouls

- Double Fouls
 - Fouls by each team during a live ball
 - After a change of possession, if the foul by the team in final possession was before the change
 - After a change of possession, if the penalty against the team first in possession is accepted
- Multiple Fouls
 - Fouls by the same team during a live ball
- Dead Ball Fouls
 - Fouls that occur while the ball is dead

Fouls

- A foul during a try cannot be paired with a dead ball foul to create a double foul or multiple foul
- You can have multiple on a running plays on a down, but you can only have one loose ball play on a down
- Batting of any loose ball is illegal
 - Exception-Grounded Scrimmage Kicks batted by K toward their goal line or non-grounded Scrimmage Kicks where there is no R player in position to catch the ball

Penalty Enforcement

- The distance for any penalty can be declined
- All distance for all penalties for all fouls are:
 - 5 Yds
 - 10 Yds
 - 15 Yds
 - But NO foul can advance the ball more than half the distance to the goal line of team who is penalized

Penalty Enforcement

- All fouls are governed by the All but One Principle except:
 - Fouls simultaneous with the snap
 - Dead ball or fouls administered as Dead Ball
 - Fouls by the Opponents of the Scoring Team if the score is accepted(not a safety)
 - Roughing the passer when the dead ball spot is beyond the NZ and no change of possession
 - Kick Catching Interference if the offended team does not accept the 15yd penalty from the spot of the foul

Penalty Enforcement

- All dead ball fouls and fouls enforced as dead ball fouls are measured from the succeeding spot
 - Unless it is after a scoring play and the offended team chooses to enforce the foul on the subsequent kickoff
- No penalty results in a safety
 - If the distance for a foul is measured from behind the offenders goal line, the result is a safety by rule

Penalty Enforcement

- The penalty for any illegal forward passes result in a loss of down
 - Unless it is a forward pass after a change of possession
- The loss of down provision of any penalty has no effect if there was a change of possession during the down or if the line to gain was reached AFTER enforcement
- The penalty of a live ball foul by the defensive team is administered from the basic spot except when that spot is in the endzone

When in Doubt Statements

- There are times when an official may be not be 100% confident in his opinion of what he/she saw
- When this happens we have statements that govern how we should rule in fairness to the game and the players involved
- Always keep these statements in mind on the field of play

When in Doubt.....

- If a pass is complete or incomplete....
 - INCOMPLETE
- If touching, contact or kicking was accidental or intentional....
 - ACCIDENTAL
- If a pass is forward or backward...
 - FORWARD
- Runner is down or not...
 - DOWN

When in Doubt.....

- If a pass was thrown forward or fumbled...
 - THROWN FORWARD
- If a kick or passed was touched or not...
 - NOT TOUCHED
- If a ball was caught or not...
 - NO CATCH
- Legal Block or Clip...
 - LEGAL BLOCK

When in Doubt....

- Is it a Touchback or Safety...
 - TOUCHBACK
- If a block is above or below the waist...
 - ABOVE
- Is it a fumble or a dead ball...
 - DEAD BALL
- Roughing vs Running into Kicker...
 - ROUGHING
- Five or Fifteen Facemask...
 - FIFTEEN

When in Doubt.....

- Remember these statements:
 - NO CHEAP TURNOVERS
 - PLAYER SAFETY IS #1 PRIORITY
 - BIG PENALTIES ONLY
 - BUCKS NOT DOES
 - SAFETY
 - POINT OF ATTACK
 - 5 MOMS IN THE STANDS KNOW IT'S A FOUL
 - BE ADMINISTRATORS OF THE GAME
NOT PARTICIPANTS
 - YOU CANNOT MISQUOTE SILENCE
 - IF YOU DON'T KNOW THEN DON'T SPEAK

When in Doubt.....

- Professionalism starts when you receive your assignment
 - Study your position in the Officials Manual
 - Study rules pertinent to your position
 - BJ should know Rule 6 cold
 - R should know Rule 10 cold
 - U should know Rule 1 and 9 cold
 - L and H should know rule 6 and 7 cold

When in Doubt.....

Communicate with your POD leader in preparation of the game

- Ask questions that you may be unsure of
- Use your POD to gain knowledge and answer your questions
- Show up at assigned times for pregame
- Come prepared with proper uniform
- Listen and participate in pregame

MOST IMPORTANT PART

HAVE FUN

&

GET THE CALL RIGHT