



2024 Football Memo – Jamboree Topics

August 12, 2024

Goal Line/Pylon Demonstration

Case Book play 8.2.1: "Runner A10 dives into the pylon at the intersection of the goal line and sideline and the ball breaks the plane of the goal line. RULING: Touchdown. Assuming the pylon was placed properly, the ball broke the plane of the goal line prior to the touching of the pylon."

As follow up, consider these rules:

The last sentence of 1-2-4: "When properly placed, the goal line pylon is out of bounds at the intersection of the sideline and the goal line extended."

The last sentence of 4-3-2: "If the ball touches a pylon, it is out of bounds behind the goal line."

Second sentence of 2-26-3: "When related to a live ball in a runner's possession (touching inbounds) while the ball is over the out of bounds area, the goal line includes the extension beyond the sidelines."

2-29-1: "A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official, that is on or outside the sideline or end line."

2-29-2: "A ball in player possession is out of bounds when the runner or the ball touches anything, other than another player or game official that is on or outside a sideline or end line."

4-3-3: "When a runner goes out of bounds, the nearest hash mark is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the ball at the time the runner crosses the plane of the sideline."

Case play 4.3.3A - summary: ball in possession of airborne player is spotted where the ball crosses the sideline

One could conceive of a scenario in which a runner had the ball in his outside arm, dove near the pylon, was completely airborne with the ball in his outstretched arm over the sideline, and the ball hits the outside edge of the pylon before the runner touches anything else. One could then make the argument that the ball never broke the plane, and the plane does not extend because the runner was not touching inbounds, and therefore the ball should be marked at the point where it crossed the sideline.

Response to that is: "Don't be that good." Live ball in runner's possession touches pylon - ANY surface of the pylon - call the TD and line up for the try. Anything else is asking for trouble.



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Momentum Rule

NFHS 8-5-1 places RESPONSIBILITY for forcing the ball from the field of play across a goal line to the player who carries, snaps, passes, fumbles or kicks the ball.

8-5-2 indicates IT IS A SAFETY when a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his team's possession,

EXCEPT; When B intercepts an opponent's forward pass, intercepts or recovers an opponent's fumble or backwards pass; or an R player catches or recovers a scrimmage or free kick between the 5 yd line and the goal line (at which point they each would become a runner) and their ORIGINAL MOMENTUM carries them into the EZ where the ball is declared dead, or goes OOB.

The ball belongs to the team in possession at the spot where the pass, fumble or kick was recovered in the field of play.

8-5-3 declares; ANY SCRIMMAGE OR FREE KICK (which is not a scoring attempt or grounded 3 point FG attempt that BREAKS THE PLANE of R's goal is (instantly) a Touchback.

To answer the question; when momentum applies, the player in possession can CHOOSE to advance the ball, or not. If not, and it's dead in the EZ, the ball is placed where he gained possession. If he chooses to advance it, and makes it out of the EZ, the succeeding spot will be wherever he takes it to.

Now, if on the goal line and a receiver catches the kick inside the one-yard line, we are going to give them the benefit of the doubt if his momentum carries them into the end zone and rule Touchback. If caught at the two-yard line, however, there is no way to sell touchback in our opinion.



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Forward Progress/Sideline/Clock Management Demonstration

When a runner steps out of bounds the forward progress spot is where the ball was when the runner stepped out of bounds.

On plays where the runner/airborne receiver stretched out the ball (before being downed) at the sideline, the forward progress spot is the foremost point of the ball where it intersects the sideline.

If a runner's progress is stopped in the field of play, the game clock should continue to run after the play unless the line to gain was made.

If a runner is stopped in the field of play and then driven backwards out of bounds, the game clock should continue to run after the play unless the line to gain was made.

If a receiver catches a pass in bounds and then slides out of bounds, the game clock should continue to run after the play unless the line to gain was made.

In all scenarios above, the chains would be reset, and the game clock would start again on the ready to play signal.

Ball Relay

When the ball is relayed between officials, it should always be thrown underhanded so that it can be caught waist high. Most officials cannot accurately throw the ball more than 10-15 yards. It takes more time to run 10 yards and then throw the ball another 10 yards than it takes to throw the ball 20 yards; however, when you consider there is a high probability the 20-yard toss will go awry and have to be chased, it's quicker to get close enough to ensure a smooth toss. It also looks much better. When the play ends out of bounds or in a side zone, the official tossing the ball should ensure players returning to their side of the line will not get in the way.

If players are still in the way, the official should hesitate until they clear the area, or the official should move a couple of steps to find a clear path. Never try to "thread the needle" between players or try to throw over their heads. Both officials and players have on occasion been hit in the head by errant tosses. If the ball ends up on the turf, it could be accidentally kicked, wasting further time.

When a team employs a hurry-up offense, the umpire must range farther than normal to retrieve the ball. All other officials must be in position to observe the snap when the ball is spotted. That avoids creating the appearance the officials are holding up the game.

In summary, ballhandling has nothing to do with how accurately the game is called but will go a long way to enhance crew credibility and can appreciably reduce down time between plays.

(Reference - REFEREE MAGAZINE July26, 2022)



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For suggestions, feedback, and comments, please feel free to contact.

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