

2016 Regular Season Bulletin 6

Illegal Participation

Play: Team B has 10 players on the field. After the ball is snapped, an 11th Team B player enters the field and moves to participate in the play.

Questions: Since the ball had been snapped when the 11th Team B player entered the field, is it Illegal Substitution or Illegal Participation. Is the penalty enforced at the previous spot or under the all-but-one principle?

Answer: 15 yards, Illegal Participation for entering and participating after the ball has been snapped. Enforced under the all-but-one principle, the basic spot being the spot where he started participating, not the spot where he entered the field. Rule 9-6-4a and Case Book 9.6 Comment, page 85.

Play: K1 punts on 4th down. R55 engages in a block at the LOS and his helmet comes off (no foul.) While the kick is in flight, R55 disengages from his initial block and runs downfield and participates by blocking K5. R2 catches the kick and runs for 10 yards and is tackled.

Question: Where is the foul for Illegal Participation by R55 enforced? Is this play an example of both Illegal Participation during a kick and PSK? Or do we go back to the previous spot and penalize R for R55's Illegal Participation?

Ruling: Rule 2-16-2h specifically excludes Illegal Participation from PSK enforcement. The penalty for Illegal Participation will be enforced from the previous spot with Team K next to put the ball in play which may give Team K a first down, even though this enforcement may not seem fair and not be in the spirit of the PSK rule. R55 must also exit the game for one play. Look at Case Book plays 9.4.3 Sit. U and 9.6.4 Sit. F.

Formation/Position at the Snap

A coach asked why officials flagged his team because a player who participated in the previous down failed to be inside the 9-yard marks before the next snap. The coach said his team, after being called for violating Rule 7-2-1, made an easy correction and had their player inside until the "ready for play" with their player then adjusting to the desired formation. However, he is now wondering why so many teams, more than in just his league, do this all the time and NO flag?

Response: I have said before that the accepted officiating practice is not to enforce 7-2-1 if the offensive player is covered or acknowledged by a defensive player. And I still stand by this philosophy. Rule 7-2-1 was put in the book to prevent hide-out plays and/or prevent a Team A substitute from slipping onto the field and setting up near his sideline just before the snap. By acknowledging the offensive player, the defensive player has created a no harm-no foul situation....no advantage, no disadvantage to either player, and therefore, no foul.

There's less of a problem with a player that has participated in the previous play than with an incoming substitute who has a greater opportunity to deceive. In the case of an incoming substitute, Rule 9-6-4d comes into play. That's when the substitute comes onto the field, camps out near his sideline, never coming inside the nine-yard marks and never recognized by the defense. That's Illegal Participation, a 15-yard penalty for deceiving opponents at or immediately before the snap.

Officials should use preventive officiating and tell the player to "go inside" until the R's "ready" whistle with the player then moving to wherever he/she needs to be. But, again, I can easily support a "no call" if the offensive player is recognized and covered by the defense.

Coach-Referee Conference

There was a change in penalty administration following a Coach-Referee conference. After the crew reset the chains and brought the teams back onto the field, the Head Coach asked the Referee if he was going to be charged a time-out. The Referee said yes, since the Head Coach was speaking to his players while the chains were being reset. INCORRECT. If the ruling is reversed, the time-out is an official's time-out. Rules 3-5-7h and 3-5-11.

The only time a team would be charged a time-out following a Coach-Referee conference is when the Referee does not reverse a previous ruling. If the team has no time-outs remaining, they are penalized 5 yards for Delay of Game. Rules 3-5-7h, 3-5-11 and 3-6-2c.

Mirroring Signals

Please do not mirror signals of other officials who are making judgments just for the sake of mirroring, i.e., incomplete pass, touchdown, tipped ball, etc. If you mirror a signal which turns out to be incorrect, you have now become part of the error. However, it is okay to mirror starting and stopping the clock as some of our clock operators don't have the best sight lines from the press box and need all the help we can give them.

Hydration Specialists

I've become aware that some leagues and conferences are calling water boys/girls/persons "hydration specialists." What's the world coming to???? ☺

Training Video

This week's training video is another group of plays from the LeMonnier series that deals with Player Conduct and Possession.

Here's the link: <http://osaafotball.arbitersports.com/front/105991/Video/player/13819/16736>