

# RULE 9

## Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules

### SECTION 1. Personal Fouls

All fouls in this section (unless noted) and any other acts of unnecessary roughness are personal fouls. For flagrant personal fouls mandating BAFA review, see Rule 9-6. The penalties for all personal fouls are as follows:

**PENALTY – Personal foul. 15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Penalties for Team A live-ball personal fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the live-ball foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line. [S7, S24, S34, S38, S39, S40, S41, S45 or S46]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

**For Team A fouls during free or scrimmage kick plays: Enforcement may be at the previous spot or the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (field goal plays exempted) (Rules 6-1-8 and 6-3-13).**

#### Flagrant Fouls

ARTICLE 1. Before the game, during the game and between periods, all flagrant fouls (Rule 2-10-1) require disqualification. Team B disqualification personal fouls require first downs if not in conflict with other rules.

#### Striking Fouls and Tripping

ARTICLE 2. a. No person subject to the rules shall strike an opponent with the knee; strike an opponent’s helmet (including the face mask), neck, face or any other part of the body with an extended forearm, elbow, locked hands, palm, fist or the heel, back or side of the open hand, or gouge an opponent. **(A.R. 9-1-2:I)**

b. No person subject to the rules shall strike an opponent with his foot or any part of his leg that is below the knee.

c. There shall be no tripping (*Exception:* Tripping the runner is not a foul).

#### • Approved Ruling 9-1-2

I. A player (a) strikes an opponent with the knee or (b) projects the knee before contact with an opponent (most apt to occur when the player is meeting a blocker). **RULING:** (a) and (b) Personal foul, striking with the knee. Penalty — 15 yards. Enforce at the previous spot if foul by Team A occurs behind the neutral zone. Safety if the foul by Team A occurs behind Team A’s goal line. First down if foul is by Team B. Disqualify if flagrant.

II. A1, a ball carrier, strikes tackler B6 with his extended forearm just before being tackled. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty — 15 yards. Enforce from the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone. Disqualification if flagrant. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line.

#### Targeting/Initiating Contact With the Crown of the Helmet

ARTICLE 3. No player shall target and initiate contact against an opponent with the crown (top) of his helmet. When in question, it is a foul. (Rule 9-6.)

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-3**

- I. Passer A12 inside the tackle box looking for an open receiver. Before or just as he releases the ball, A12 is hit from the side at the ribs, thigh or knee by B79, who leads with the crown (top) of his helmet. **RULING:** Foul by B79 for targeting his opponent and initiating contact with the top of his helmet. Ejection for a flagrant foul.

**Defenseless Player: Contact to Head or Neck Area**

ARTICLE 4. No player shall target and initiate contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless opponent with the helmet, forearm, elbow or shoulder. When in question, it is a foul (Rule 2-27-14 and 9-6).

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-4**

- I. Receiver A83 has just leaped and received a forward pass. As A83 is about to regain his balance, B45 launches and drives into A83 above the shoulder area with his helmet or shoulder. **RULING:** Foul by B45 for targeting and initiating contact with a defenseless opponent above the shoulders. Ejection for a flagrant foul.
- II. As ball carrier A20 sweeps around the end and heads upfield, he lowers his head and contacts defensive end B89 who is trying to tackle him. The players meet helmet to helmet. **RULING:** No foul. Neither A20 nor B89 is a defenseless player and neither has targeted his opponent in the sense of Rule 9-1-3.

**Clipping**

ARTICLE 5. There shall be no clipping (Rule 2-5).

**Exceptions:**

1. Offensive players who are on the line of scrimmage at the snap within the blocking zone (Rule 2-3-6) legally may clip in the blocking zone, subject to the following restrictions:
  - (a) A player in the blocking zone may not block an opponent with the force of the initial contact from behind and at or below the knee.
  - (b) A player on the line of scrimmage within the blocking zone may not leave the zone and return and legally clip.
  - (c) The blocking zone disintegrates when the ball leaves the zone (Rule 2-3-6).
2. When a player turns his back to a potential blocker who has committed himself in intent and direction or movement.
3. When a player attempts to reach a runner or legally attempts to recover or catch a fumble, a backward pass, a kick or a touched forward pass, he may push an opponent below the waist at or to the buttocks (Rule 9-3-3-c Exception 3).
4. When an eligible player behind the neutral zone pushes an opponent below the waist at or to the buttocks to get to a forward pass (Rule 9-3-3-c Exception 5).
5. Clipping is allowed against the runner.

**Blocking Below the Waist**

ARTICLE 6. There shall be no blocking below the waist (Rule 2-3-2) (**A.R. 9-1-6:I-VII**)

**Exceptions:**

1. Against the runner.
2. Before a change of possession on scrimmage downs that do not include kicks, blocking below the waist is allowed as follows:
  - (a) Players of the offensive team who at the snap are:
    - (1) On the line of scrimmage more than seven yards from the middle lineman of the offensive formation; or
    - (2) In the backfield with any part of the body outside the tackle box; or
    - (3) In motion.may block below the waist only along a north-south line (Rule 2-12-9) or toward

the sideline adjacent to them at the snap.

- (b) Players of the offensive team who at the snap are completely inside the tackle box or on the line of scrimmage inside the seven-yard limit may block below the waist.
- (c) Players of the defensive team may block below the waist until the ball has gone more than five yards beyond the neutral zone. However, they may not block below the waist against a Team A player in position to receive a backward pass. They also may not block below the waist against an eligible Team A receiver beyond the neutral zone unless attempting to get to the ball or the ball carrier.

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-6**

- I. A1, an end, is positioned 11 yards to the left of the snapper at the snap. B2 is between the original position of A1 and the sideline. A1 blocks B2 away from the position of the ball at the snap. The block by A1 is below the waist. **RULING:** Legal block because it is directed toward A1's adjacent sideline.
- II. Quarterback A1 is forced to run out of his protecting pocket and scramble back and forth across the field. A2, a wide receiver, positioned 12 yards to the left of the snapper, moves downfield and then returns toward the neutral zone. A2 then blocks B2 at the neutral zone and below the waist toward the sideline to the right. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty — 15 yards.
- III. On a run or pass option play, wide receiver A2 at the snap is positioned 12 yards to the right of the snapper. He moves downfield and then returns toward the neutral zone. A2 then blocks B2 eight yards beyond the neutral zone and below the waist toward the sideline to the left. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty — 15 yards.
- IV. A1, a flanker, positioned to the left side of a formation, runs a deep reverse to the right side after receiving the ball from a teammate. A2, a spread end, at the snap is positioned 10 yards outside the snapper on the right side of the formation. A2 blocks B2, a defensive end, toward the left sideline. The block by A2 is below the waist and occurs behind or one yard beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty — 15 yards. Enforce at previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone.
- V. A1, a wing back, positioned 5 yards outside the tackle box to the right, goes in motion toward the ball before the snap. At the snap his motion has taken him directly behind the snapper. After the snap, A1 blocks B2 below the waist toward the left sideline. **RULING:** Legal block.
- VI. At the snap, flanker A2 is positioned 10 yards outside the snapper to the left. As he moves toward the near (left) sideline he blocks a defensive halfback below the waist toward the left sideline. **RULING:** Legal block.
- VII. Back A22 is stationary inside the tackle box at the snap. As the play develops, he is leading a sweep to the right side and blocks below the waist against a linebacker. **RULING:** Legal block in any direction.

### Late Hit, Action Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 7. a. There shall be no piling on, falling on, or throwing the body on an opponent after the ball becomes dead. **(A.R. 9-1-7:I)**

- b. No opponent shall tackle or block the runner when he is clearly out of bounds or throw him to the ground after the ball becomes dead.
- c. It is illegal for any player to be clearly out of bounds when he initiates a block against an opponent who is out of bounds. The spot of the foul is where the blocker crosses the sideline in going out of bounds.

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-7**

- I. After the ball is dead, a player throws himself on a prostrate opponent who does not have the ball. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty — 15 yards from succeeding spot and first down if by a Team B player and not in conflict with other rules. "Piling on" applies to a ball carrier or to any other opponent who is prostrate when the ball becomes dead.

### Helmet and Face Mask Fouls

- ARTICLE 8. a. No player shall continuously contact an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (**Exception:** By or against the runner).
- b. No player shall grasp and then twist, turn or pull the face mask, chin strap or any helmet opening of an opponent. It is not a foul if the face mask, chin strap or helmet opening is not grasped then twisted, turned or pulled. When in question, it is a foul.

### Roughing the Passer

ARTICLE 9. No defensive player shall charge into a passer or throw him to the ground when it is obvious the ball has been thrown. (**Exception:** A defensive player who is blocked by a Team A player(s) with a force so that he has no opportunity to avoid contact with the passer. However, this does not relieve the defensive player of responsibility for personal fouls as described elsewhere in this section.) (**A.R. 2-30-4:I and II**) (**A.R. 9-1-9:I**) (**A.R. 10-2-2:XIII**) The penalty is added to the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down.

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-9**

- i. After passer A17 releases the ball, B68 takes two strides and charges into A17, showing no attempt to avoid contact. **RULING:** Roughing the passer. The passer is a defenseless player who is vulnerable to injury and must be fully protected. After taking two strides, B68 should be aware that A17 has released the ball and be able to avoid contacting him.

### Chop Blocking

ARTICLE 10. There shall be no chop blocking (Rule 2-3-3) (**A.R. 9-1-10:I-V**).

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-10**

- i. On a forward pass play, A75 is blocking B66 at the waist behind the neutral zone. While A75 maintains contact, A47 subsequently blocks B66 at his thigh. **RULING:** Chop block, 15 yards from the previous spot.
- ii. As the flow of the play moves to the left, right tackle A77 is disengaging from his block above the thigh with B50 when A27 blocks B50 at his knee. **RULING:** Chop block, 15 yards. Previous-spot enforcement if the foul occurs behind the neutral zone.
- iii. Immediately after the snap, left guard A65 and left tackle A79 simultaneously block B66, who is in the neutral zone. (a) Both blocks are at the thigh. (b) One contact is at the waist and the other at the knee. **RULING:** (a) Legal blocks for a low-low combination. (b) Foul, chop block.
- iv. Tight end A87 and wingback A43 are leading the play when both simultaneously block linebacker B17, who is three yards beyond the neutral zone. (a) Both blocks above the waist. (b) One block is above the waist and the other at the knee. **RULING:** (a) Legal blocks. (b) Chop block.
- v. After snapping the ball, snapper A54 brushes by nose guard B62 on his way to block a linebacker. A54 makes slight contact with B62, or B62 reaches out and uses his arm to initiate contact with A54. While B62 and A54 are in contact, right guard A68 blocks B62 at the knee from the front. **RULING:** Legal. A54 is not blocking B62. The incidental contact or B62's initiating contact does not constitute part of a combination block, and hence there is no chop block.

### Leverage, Leaping and Landing

- ARTICLE 11. a. No defensive player, in an attempt to gain an advantage, may step, jump or stand on an opponent (See also Rule 9-3-5-b).
- b. No defensive player who runs forward from beyond the neutral zone and leaps from beyond the neutral zone in an obvious attempt to block a field goal or try may land on any player(s).
1. It is not a foul if the player was aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the

line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped.

2. It is not a foul if the player leaps from in or behind the neutral zone.
3. It is not a foul if an offensive player initiates contact against the player who leaps.

### Contact Against an Opponent Out of the Play

ARTICLE 12. a. No player shall tackle or run into a receiver when a forward pass to him obviously is not catchable. This is a personal foul and not pass interference.

- b. No player shall run into or throw himself against an opponent obviously out of the play either before or after the ball is dead

### Hurdling

ARTICLE 13. There shall be no hurdling. (*Exception:* The ball carrier may hurdle an opponent.)

### Contact Against the Snapper

ARTICLE 14. When a team is in scrimmage kick formation, a defensive player may not initiate contact with the snapper until one second has elapsed after the snap. (**A.R. 9-1-14:I-III**)

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-14**

- I. A10 is in a shotgun-type formation 7½ yards behind the snapper, who has his head down and is looking backward through his legs. Immediately after the snap, nose guard B55 charges directly at the snapper and contacts him by pushing him backward. **RULING:** Legal. The snapper is not afforded any special protection because it was not reasonably obvious that a kick might be attempted (Rule 2-16-10). The snapper does have the usual protection against any personal foul for unnecessary roughness.
- II. Team A is in an obvious scrimmage kick formation. Immediately after the snap, nose guard B55 charges directly at the snapper, contacts him, and drives him backward. The ball is snapped to an upback three yards behind the scrimmage line or to the potential kicker, who instead runs with or passes the ball. **RULING:** Foul. Penalty — 15 yards and automatic first down. The snapper may not be contacted until one second has elapsed after the snap when Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation and it is reasonably obvious that a kick might be attempted.
- III. Immediately after the snap, with Team A in an obvious scrimmage kick formation, noseguard B71 attempts to "shoot the gap" between the snapper and the adjacent lineman. B71's initial legal contact is with the lineman next to the snapper. **RULING:** Legal. Incidental contact with the snapper after this initial legal contact is not a foul (Rule 2-16-10).

### Horse Collar Tackle

ARTICLE 15. a. All players are prohibited from grabbing the inside back collar of the shoulder pads or jersey, or the inside collar of the side of the shoulder pads or jersey, and immediately pulling the ball carrier down. This does not apply to a ball carrier, including a potential passer, who is inside the tackle box (Rule 2-34). Note that the tackle box disintegrates when the ball leaves it.

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-15**

- I. As ball carrier A20 races down the field near the sideline, defender B56 grabs him from behind by the back of the jersey at the collar or by the collar of his shoulder pad. B56 continues with this contact for several yards but A20 does not go to the ground until tackled by another defender. **RULING:** Legal play. B56 did not foul because he did not immediately pull A20 down.

### **Roughing or Running into Kicker or Holder**

ARTICLE 16. a. When it is obvious that a scrimmage kick will be made, no opponent shall run into or rough the kicker or the holder of a place kick. **(A.R. 9-1-16:I, III and VI)**

1. Roughing is a live-ball personal foul that endangers the kicker or holder.
  2. Running into the kicker or holder is a live-ball foul that occurs when the kicker or holder is displaced from his kicking or holding position but is not roughed. **(A.R. 9-1-16:II)** *Note: Running into the kicker carries a five-yard penalty.*
  3. Incidental contact with a kicker or holder is not a foul.
  4. The kicker's protection under this rule ends:
    - (a) When he has had a reasonable time to regain his balance **(A.R. 9-1-16:IV)**; or
    - (b) When he carries the ball outside the tackle box (Rule 2-34) before kicking.
  5. When a defensive player's contact against the kicker or holder is caused by an opponent's block (legal or illegal), there is no foul for running into or roughing.
  6. A player who makes contact with the kicker or holder after touching the kick is not charged with running into or roughing the kicker.
  7. When a player other than one who blocks a scrimmage kick runs into or roughs the kicker or holder it is a foul.
  8. When in question whether the foul is *running into* or *roughing*, the foul is *roughing*.
- b. A kicker or holder simulating being roughed or run into by a defensive player commits an unsportsmanlike act. **(A.R. 9-1-16:V)**

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the previous spot [S27].**

- c. The kicker of a free kick may not be blocked until he has advanced five yards beyond his restraining line or the kick has touched a player, an official or the ground.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the previous spot [S40].**

• **Approved Ruling 9-1-16**

- I. A1 catches a long snap and plans to punt from behind his line of scrimmage, but misses the ball, which falls to the ground. A1 is then contacted by B1. **RULING:** Team A fumble. No foul by B1. There is no kicker until the ball is kicked.
- II. A1 kicks the ball, after which B1, unable to stop his attempt to block the kick, runs into the kicker or holder. **RULING:** Penalty — Five yards from the previous spot. Roughing and 15 yards and first down if in question as to whether the foul is "running into" or "roughing".
- III. A1, from a non-scrimmage kick formation, makes a quick, unexpected kick so suddenly that B1 cannot avoid contact. **RULING:** This is not roughing or running into the kicker, since the rule applies only when it is reasonably obvious that a kick will be made.
- IV. B1 runs into player A1 who has kicked the ball and has had a reasonable time to regain his balance. **RULING:** Not a foul by B1 unless ruled as running into or throwing himself against an opponent obviously out of the play (9-1-12).
- V. After B1 runs into the kicker, kicker A25 simulates being roughed. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls.
- VI. Kicker A1, in a scrimmage kick formation, moves laterally two or three steps to recover a faulty snap, or recovers a snap that went over his head, and then kicks the ball. He is contacted by B2 in an unsuccessful attempt to block the kick. **RULING:** A1 does not automatically lose his protection in either case unless he carries the ball outside the tackle box. While in the tackle box, A1 is entitled to protection as in any other kicking situation. When it becomes obvious that A1 intends to kick in a normal punting position, defensive players must avoid him after he kicks the ball.
- VII. Punter A22 is 15 yards behind the neutral zone when he catches the long snap, sprints to his right at an angle toward the line of scrimmage, and runs outside the tackle box. He then stops and punts the ball, and is immediately hit by a diving B89. **RULING:** Legal play, no foul by B89. A22 loses his roughing or running-into protection by carrying the ball outside the tackle box.

## SECTION 2. Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

### Unsportsmanlike Acts

ARTICLE 1. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct or any act that interferes with orderly game administration on the part of players, substitutes, coaches, authorised attendants or any other persons subject to the rules, before the game, during the game or between periods. Infractions for these acts by players are administered as either live-ball or dead-ball fouls depending on when they occur.

a. Specifically prohibited acts and conduct include:

1. No player, substitute, coach or other person subject to the rules shall use abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning to an opponent, to game officials or to the image of the game, including but not limited to:
  - (a) Pointing the finger(s), hand(s), arm(s) or ball at an opponent, or imitating the slashing of the throat.
  - (b) Taunting, baiting or ridiculing an opponent verbally.
  - (c) Inciting an opponent or spectators in any other way, such as simulating the firing of a weapon or placing a hand by the ear to request recognition.
  - (d) Any delayed, excessive, prolonged or choreographed act by which a player (or players) attempts to focus attention upon himself (or themselves).
  - (e) An unopposed ball carrier obviously altering stride as he approaches the opponent's goal line or diving into the end zone.
  - (f) Removal of a player's helmet before he is in the team area (*Exceptions*: Team, media or injury timeouts; equipment adjustment; through play; between periods; and during a measurement for a first down).
  - (g) Punching one's own chest or crossing one's arms in front of the chest while standing over a prone player.
  - (h) Going into the stands to interact with spectators, or bowing at the waist after a good play.

**PENALTY – Live-ball fouls by players: 15 yards [S27]. Live-ball fouls by non-players and all dead-ball fouls: 15 yards from the succeeding spot. [S7 and S27] Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be disqualified. If a player or an identified squad member in uniform commits two unsportsmanlike fouls in the same game, he shall be disqualified [S47].**

2. After a score or any other play, the player in possession immediately must return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot. This prohibits:
  - (a) Kicking, throwing, spinning or carrying (including off of the field) the ball any distance that requires an official to retrieve it.
  - (b) Spiking the ball to the ground (*Exception*: A forward pass to conserve time (Rule 7-3-2-e)).
  - (c) Throwing the ball high into the air.
  - (d) Any other unsportsmanlike act or actions that delay the game.

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot. [S7 and S27] Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be disqualified. If a player or an identified squad member in uniform commits two unsportsmanlike fouls in the same game, he shall be disqualified [S47].**

b. Other prohibited acts include:

1. During the game, coaches, substitutes and authorised attendants in the team area shall not be on the field of play or outside the 25-yard lines without permission from the referee unless legally entering or leaving the field (**Exception:** Rules 1-2-4-h and 3-3-8-c).
2. No disqualified person shall be in view of the field of play (Rule 9-2-6).
3. No person or mascot subject to the rules, except players, officials and eligible substitutes, shall be on the field of play or end zones during any period without permission from the referee. If a player is injured, attendants may come inbounds to attend him, but they must obtain recognition from an official.
4. No substitute(s) may enter the field of play or end zones for purposes other than replacing a player(s) or to fill a player vacancy(ies). This includes demonstrations after any play (**A.R. 9-2-1:I**).
5. Persons subject to the rules, including bands, shall not create any noise that prohibits a team from hearing its signals. (Rule 1-1-6)

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S27].**

**Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules.**

**Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be disqualified [S47].**

• **Approved Ruling 9-2-1**

- I. Team B scores a touchdown on a kickoff return, and substitutes from the Team B area, with no intention of entering the game, run to the end zone to congratulate the ball carrier. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike act. Penalty — 15 yards, enforced on the try or the succeeding kick off. Officials should note the numbers of the offending players, for possible disqualification later in the game upon committing a second unsportsmanlike conduct foul (9-2-1-a-Penalty).
- II. Third and 15 at the B-20. Eligible A88 catches a pass at the B-18 and heads for the goal line. At the B-10 he goes into a "goose step" and continues this action as he crosses the goal line. **RULING:** Live-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. Fifteen-yard penalty enforced at the spot of the foul, which is the B-10, and repeat third down. Third and 20 at the B-25.
- III. Second and 5 at the B-40. Back A22 takes a backward pass from the quarterback, circles right end, and heads for the goal line. Guard A66, who had pulled out to lead the play, legally blocks B90 to the ground and then stands over him at the B-30 taunting and screaming obscenities. This draws a flag from the head linesman, when A22 is at the B-10 before continuing into the end zone. **RULING:** Live-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. Fifteen-yard penalty enforced at the spot of the foul, which is the B-30, and repeat second down. Second and 10 at the B-45.
- IV. Third and 15 at the B-20. Eligible A88 catches a pass at the B-18 and heads for the goal line. Very close to the goal line he dives into the end zone, with no Team B player closer than about 10 yards. The field judge is uncertain of the exact spot where A88 started his diving action. **RULING:** Foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. Administer as a dead-ball foul. The touchdown counts and the penalty is enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff.
- V. Second and seven at the B-30. Nose guard B55 is lined up in the neutral zone at the snap. Back A22 takes the ball on a quick play up the middle, bursts into the open, and at the B-10 he turns around and prances backward into the end zone. The head linesman and the line judge both have flags for the offside foul, and the back judge drops his flag for the action by A22. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls, repeat the down. Second and seven at the B-30.
- VI. First and 10 at the 50. The quarterback pitches out to running back A44 who circles right end and races toward the goal line. The line judge trailing the play flags linebacker B57 for screaming obscenities at him, complaining that he was held by the tight end. A44 scores a touchdown. **RULING:** Live-ball unsportsmanlike conduct against B57. The penalty carries over to either the try or the kickoff, at the option of Team A.



- VII. Third and 15 at the A-45. A12 drops back to pass and is sacked by tackle B77 for a 10-yard loss. B77 leaps to his feet, beats his chest, stands over A12 and taunts him, and showboats to the crowd, drawing flags from the referee and the line judge. **RULING:** Dead-ball unsportsmanlike conduct by B77. Fifteen-yard penalty at the dead-ball spot plus automatic first down. First and 10 for Team A at the 50.
- VIII. Safety B33 intercepts a pass at the B-10 and returns for a touchdown. As he is coming down the sideline covering the play the line judge drops his flag after he runs into the Team B head coach who is just on the field of play near the B-40. **RULING:** Although this is a foul that takes place while the ball is alive, it is treated as a dead-ball foul because it is committed by a non-player. The touchdown counts and the 15-yard penalty is enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff.

## Unfair Tactics

ARTICLE 2. a. No player shall conceal the ball in or beneath his clothing or equipment or substitute any other article for the ball.

b. No simulated replacements or substitutions may be used to confuse opponents. No tactic associated with substitutes or the substitution process may be used to confuse opponents (Rule 3-5-2-e). **(A.R. 9-2-2:I-V)**

c. No equipment may be used to confuse opponents (Rule 1-4-2-d).

**PENALTY – [a-c] — Live-ball foul. 15 yards from the previous spot [S27]. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

d. No player may play with cleats more than ½-inch in length (Rule 1-4-7-d).

**PENALTY – Disqualification for the remainder of the game and the team's next game [S27 and S47]. Administer as a dead-ball foul; penalty enforced at the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Team timeout.**

**VIOLATION – Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b [S23, S3 or S21]. If the disqualification occurs during the last game of a season, players with eligibility remaining will serve the next-game disqualification during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

e. The referee will notify (in writing) his assigning agent of all disqualifications for illegal cleats. The assigning agency becomes responsible for implementation of the penalty.

### • Approved Ruling 9-2-2

- I. After the ball is ready for play, Team A goes into a formation with two players split wide on both sides of the snapper and two other Team A linemen adjacent to the snapper. No more than four players are legally in the backfield. Team A sends in two substitutes who take positions on the line of scrimmage adjacent to the two split offensive linemen on the opposite side of the field from their team bench. This leaves Team A with nine players on the line of scrimmage and four backfield players all legally in position. Immediately and before the snap, two Team A linemen nearest their team's bench leave the field and are off at the snap. Seven players are on the line of scrimmage, five of whom are Team A linemen numbered 50 to 79. **RULING:** Penalty — 15 yards from the previous spot This is a simulated replacement of a player to confuse the opponents.
- II. On fourth down at Team B's 12-yard line, A1 enters the field with a kicking shoe while his 11 teammates are in the huddle. A1 kneels and measures the distance from the neutral zone to the kicking spot. While his teammates are leaving the huddle, A1 leaves the field with the shoe. Team A quickly runs a play from scrimmage. **RULING:** Team A foul. Penalty — 15 yards from the previous spot. There shall be no simulated replacement of a player to confuse the opponents, and a player who communicates must remain in the game for one down.
- III. A1 leaves the field of play during a down. Team A huddles with 10 players. Substitute A12 enters and A2 simulates leaving the field, but sets near the sideline for a "hide-out" pass. **RULING:** Penalty — 15 yards from the previous spot. This is a simulated

replacement of a player to confuse opponents.

- IV. While a team is legally set to attempt a field goal, the potential holder for the kick goes toward his team area asking for a shoe. A shoe is thrown on the field and the player, in motion toward his team area, turns toward the goal line. The ball is snapped to the player in the kicking position, who throws a pass to the player who had turned upfield after asking for a shoe. **RULING:** Penalty — 15 yards from the previous spot.
- V. Team A is lined up in scrimmage kick formation and has been set for one second. One of the offensive backs shouts to and motions to A40, the blocker on the right wing, to get off the field. At the snap, A40 is in legal motion toward his sideline. A40 turns downfield and becomes a pass receiver. **RULING:** Penalty — 15 yards from the previous spot. This is a tactic associated with the substitution process to deceive opponents.

## Unfair Acts

ARTICLE 3. The following are unfair acts:

- a. While the ball is in play, any person other than a player or an official interferes in any way with the ball, player or an official.
- b. A team refuses to play within two minutes after ordered to do so by the referee.
- c. A team repeatedly commits fouls for which penalties can be enforced only by halving the distance to its goal line.
- d. An obviously unfair act not specifically covered by the rules occurs during the game.

**(A.R. 4-2-1:II)**

**PENALTY – The referee may take any action he considers equitable, which includes directing that the down be repeated, assessing a 15-yard penalty, awarding a score, or suspending or forfeiting the game [S27].**

## Contacting an Official

ARTICLE 4. Persons subject to the rules shall not intentionally contact a game official forcibly during the game.

**PENALTY – Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Automatic disqualification [S7, S27 and S47].**

## Game Administration Interference

ARTICLE 5. While the ball is in play, coaches, substitutes and authorized attendants in the team area may not be between the sideline and coaching line or on the field of play.

**PENALTY – Administer as a dead-ball foul. First and second infractions: Delay of game for sideline interference, five yards from the succeeding spot. [S21 and S29] Third and subsequent infractions: Unsportsmanlike conduct for sideline interference, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. [S27 and S29]**

## Disqualified players

- ARTICLE 6. a. Any player or identified squad member in uniform who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game shall be disqualified.
- b. A disqualified player must leave the playing enclosure within a reasonable amount of time after his disqualification. He must remain out of view of the field of play under team supervision for the duration of the game.

## SECTION 3. Blocking, Use of Hands or Arms

### Who May Block

ARTICLE 1. Players of either team may block opponents, provided it is not pass interference, interference with the opportunity to catch a kick, or a personal foul (*Exception:* Rules 6-1-2-g and 6-5-4).

### Interfering for or Helping the Ball Carrier or Passer

ARTICLE 2. a. The ball carrier or passer may use his hand or arm to ward off or push opponents.

- b. The ball carrier shall not grasp a teammate; and no other player of his team shall grasp, pull, push, lift or charge into him to assist him in forward progress.
- c. Teammates of the ball carrier or passer may interfere for him by blocking but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner while contacting an opponent.

**PENALTY – Five yards [S44].**

### Use of Hands or Arms by Offense

ARTICLE 3. a. A teammate of a ball carrier or a passer legally may block with his shoulders, his hands, the outer surface of his arms or any other part of his body under the following provisions.

- 1. The hand(s) shall be:
  - (a) In advance of the elbow.
  - (b) Inside the frame of the opponent's body (*Exception:* When the opponent turns his back to the blocker). (**A.R. 9-3-3:VI and VII**)
  - (c) At or below the shoulder(s) of the blocker and the opponent (*Exception:* When the opponent squats, ducks or submarines).
  - (d) Apart and never in a locked position.
- 2. The hand(s) shall be open with the palm(s) facing the frame of the opponent or closed or cupped with the palms not facing the opponent. (**A.R. 9-3-3:I-IV, VI-VIII**)

**PENALTY – 10 yards. Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line. [S42].**

- b. Holding or illegal obstruction by a teammate of the ball carrier or passer applies to Rule 9-3-3-a:
  - 1. The hand(s) and arm(s) shall not be used to grasp, pull or encircle in any way that illegally impedes or illegally obstructs an opponent.
  - 2. The hand(s) or arm(s) shall not be used to hook, clamp or otherwise illegally impede or illegally obstruct an opponent.

**PENALTY – 10 yards. Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line. [S42].**

- c. A block in the back (other than against the ball carrier) is illegal (**A.R. 9-3-3:I and VII**) (**A.R. 10-2-2:XII**)

#### *Exceptions:*

- 1. Offensive players who are on the line of scrimmage at the snap within the blocking zone (Rule 2-3-6) may legally block in the back in the blocking zone, subject to the following restrictions:
  - (a) A player on the line of scrimmage within this blocking zone may not leave the

zone and return and legally block in the back.

- (b) The blocking zone disintegrates when the ball leaves the zone (Rule 2-3-6).
2. When a player turns his back to a potential blocker who has committed himself in intent and direction of movement.
  3. When a player attempts to reach a runner or legally attempts to recover or catch a fumble, a backward pass, a kick or a touched forward pass, he may push an opponent in the back above the waist (Rule 9-1-5-Exception-3).
  4. When the opponent turns his back to the blocker under Rule 9-3-3-a-1-b.
  5. When an eligible player behind the neutral zone pushes an opponent in the back above the waist to get to a forward pass (Rule 9-1-5-Exception-4).

**PENALTY – 10 yards. Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line. [S43].**

- d. The following acts by the teammate of the ball carrier or passer are illegal:
  1. The fist(s) and arm(s) shall not be used to deliver a blow (Rule 9-1-2-a). (**A.R. 9-3-3:IV**)
  2. Continuous contact to an opponent’s helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (Rule 9-1-8-a).

**PENALTY – 15 yards. Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line [S38]. Disqualification if flagrant [S47].**

**For Team A fouls during a free or scrimmage kick play (field-goal plays exempted): Enforcement may be at the previous spot or the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.**

- e. A player on the kicking team may:
  1. During a scrimmage kick play, use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off an opponent attempting to block him when he is beyond the neutral zone.
  2. During a free kick play, use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off an opponent who is attempting to block him.
  3. During a scrimmage kick play or a free kick play, when he is eligible to touch the ball, legally use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to push an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball.
- f. An eligible player of the passing team legally may use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off or push an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball after a legal forward pass has been touched by any player or official. (Rules 7-3-5, 7-3-8, 7-3-9 and 7-3-11).
- **Approved Ruling 9-3-3**
  - I. A6 is advancing the ball. During the run, A12 vigorously blocks B2 with a rough push in the back above the waist. **RULING:** Illegal block in the back. Penalty — 10 yards.
  - II. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier, while charging across the neutral zone, contacts an opponent with his hands and arms not parallel to the ground or his hands cupped or closed but with the palms not facing the opponent. **RULING:** Legal use of hands.
  - III. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier, behind the neutral zone, has his arms parallel to the ground and contacts an opponent above the shoulders. **RULING:** Illegal use of hands. Penalty — 10 yards or 15 yards for personal foul, previous-spot enforcement. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line.
  - IV. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier delivers a blow with the hand(s) closed to an opponent below the shoulders. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty — 15 yards. Enforce at the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone. Safety if foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line.
  - V. A2’s hands contact defensive player B2 in a legal block. B2 spins to avoid blocker A2 whose hands then contact B2’s back. **RULING:** Legal block.

- VI. A2's hands contact defensive player B2's back when B2 spins to avoid A2. A2 keeps his hands on B2's back while B2 advances toward the passer. **RULING:** Legal block.
- VII. A2's hands contact defensive player B2 when B2 spins to avoid blocker A2, whose hands then contact B2's back. After A2's hands lose contact with B2, A2 advances and pushes B2 in the back. **RULING:** Illegal block in the back. Penalty — 10 yards. Enforce at the previous spot if foul occurs behind neutral zone (Rule 2-3-4). Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- VIII. A1 in, beyond or behind the neutral zone contacts an opponent with open hand or with hands closed or cupped and palms not facing the opponent. **RULING:** Legal block.

### Use of Hands or Arms by Defense

ARTICLE 4. a. Defensive players may use hands and arms to push, pull, ward off or lift offensive players when attempting to reach the runner.

- b. Defensive players may not use hands and arms to tackle, hold or otherwise illegally obstruct an opponent other than a runner.

**PENALTY – 10 yards [S42].**

- c. Defensive players may use hands and arms to push, pull, ward off or lift offensive players obviously attempting to block them. Defensive players may ward off or legally block an eligible pass receiver until that player occupies the same yard line as the defender or until the opponent could not possibly block him. Continuous contact is illegal. (**A.R. 9-3-4:I and II**)

**PENALTY – 10 or 15 yards [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- d. When no attempt is being made to get at the ball or the runner, defensive players must comply with Rules 9-3-3-a, 9-3-3-b, 9-3-3-c and 9-3-3-d.

**PENALTY – 10 or 15 yards [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- e. When a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone during a forward-pass play and a contact foul that is not pass interference is committed beyond the neutral zone, the enforcement spot is the previous spot. This includes Rule 9-3-4-c. (**A.R. 7-3-9:I**) (**A.R. 9-3-4:I and II**)

**PENALTY – 10 or 15 yards from the previous spot, plus first down if the foul occurred against an eligible receiver before the pass was touched [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- f. A defensive player legally may use his hands or arms to ward off or block an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball (Rule 9-1-5 Exceptions 3 and 4 and Rule 9-3-3-c Exceptions 3 and 5):
  1. During a backward pass, fumble or kick that he is eligible to touch.
  2. During any forward pass that crossed the neutral zone and has been touched by any player or official.
- g. A defensive player may not continuously contact an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (**Exception:** Against the runner).

**PENALTY – 15 yards and a first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules [S38].**

- **Approved Ruling 9-3-4**

- I. Before a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone is thrown, Team B holds eligible A1, who is beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Team B foul, holding. Penalty — 10 yards and first down, previous-spot enforcement.
- II. B50, in an attempt to reach the kicker, pulls lineman A60 by the shoulders and (a) releases A60 as he goes by or (b) continues to hold A60. **RULING:** (a) Legal. (b) Holding. Penalty — 10 yards, previous spot enforcement.

### Player Restrictions

ARTICLE 5. a. No player may position himself with his feet on the back or shoulders of a teammate before the snap.

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul, 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S27].**

- b. No defensive player, in an attempt to block, bat or catch a kick, may:
1. Step, jump or stand on a teammate (Rule 9-1-11).
  2. Place a hand(s) on a teammate to get leverage for additional height.
  3. Be picked up by a teammate, or be elevated, propelled or pushed.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the previous spot [S27].**

### When Ball is Loose

ARTICLE 6. When the ball is loose, no player shall hold an opponent; illegally block an opponent in the back; twist, turn or pull an opponent's face mask or any helmet opening; or illegally use his hands or commit a personal foul (A.R. 7-3-9:I).

**PENALTY – 10 or 15 yards. Penalties for these Team A team fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line (Rule 10-2) [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

## SECTION 4. Batting and Kicking

### Batting a Loose Ball

ARTICLE 1. a. While a pass is in flight, only a player who is eligible to touch the ball may bat it in any direction (*Exception:* Rule 9-4-2).

- b. Any player may block a scrimmage kick in the field of play or the end zone.
- c. No player shall bat other loose balls forward in the field of play or in any direction if the ball is in the end zone (Rule 2-2-3-a) (*Exception:* Rule 6-3-11). (A.R. 6-3-11:I) (A.R. 9-4-1:I-XI) (A.R. 10-2-2:II)

**PENALTY – 10 yards and loss of down for fouls by Team A if the loss of down is not in conflict with other rules [S31 and S9]. [*Exception:* No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick is beyond the neutral zone].**

• **Approved Ruling 9-4-1**

- I. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team A. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. The result of the play is a touchdown.
- II. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team B. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. The result of the play is a touchback, safety.
- III. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the field of play. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. During regulation play, postscrimmage kick enforcement gives a safety by penalty. The ball remains alive, and Team A may elect the result of the play. If Team A recovers, does not score and accepts the penalty, or if the play occurs in an extra period, enforcement is at the previous spot.
- IV. Team A attempts a place kick on the try. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes out of bounds in the end zone. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Penalty — Half the distance from

- the previous spot. Postscrimmage kick rules do not apply on the try (Rule 10-2-3).
- V. Team A attempts a place kick on the try. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team A. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Team A may decline the penalty and scores two points.
  - VI. Team A attempts a field goal, and B23, in the end zone, goes above the crossbar and catches the ball. **RULING:** Legal play.
  - VII. Team A's fumble in flight is batted forward by B1, and the ball goes out of bounds behind Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Safety. Batting a fumble in flight does not add a new impetus (Rule 8-7-2-b). Team B foul. Penalty — 10 yards.
  - VIII. Team A's backward pass in flight is batted forward by B1, and the ball goes out of bounds behind Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Safety. A pass may be batted in any direction and the impetus is charged to Team A's pass (8-5-1-a).
  - IX. A free kick is muffed in flight by a Team B player in his end zone. While the ball is loose in the end zone, a Team B player bats the ball out of the end zone. **RULING:** The result of the play is a touchback. Team B foul for illegally batting a ball in the end zone. Penalty — 10 yards from the previous spot.
  - X. After intercepting Team A's legal forward pass on Team B's 20-yard line, B1 fumbles at Team B's 38-yard line and B2 illegally bats the loose ball at Team B's 30-yard line. The ball goes forward and out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B foul. Penalty — 10-yards from the spot of the foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the 20-yard line. No loss of down is included in the penalty since Team B is awarded a new series after the penalty enforcement (Rule 5-1-1-e-1).
  - XI. Team A is prepared to kick off. The ball is on the tee and the referee has signaled it ready for play. As the kicker approaches the ball it begins to roll off the tee just as he starts his kicking motion. The kicker follows through and kicks the ball as it continues to roll off or near the tee. **RULING:** No foul. This is not a violation of either 9-4-4 or 9-2-1-a-2-a. The officials should stop play and have the teams line up for a new kickoff. If weather conditions dictate, Team A should have a player hold the ball on the tee.

### **Batting a Backward Pass**

ARTICLE 2. A backward pass in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team.  
**PENALTY – 10 yards [S31].**

### **Batting Ball in Possession**

ARTICLE 3. A ball in player possession may not be batted forward by a player of that team.  
**PENALTY – 10 yards [S31].**

### **Illegally Kicking a Ball**

ARTICLE 4. A player shall not kick a loose ball, a forward pass or a ball being held for a place kick by an opponent. These illegal acts do not change the status of the loose ball or forward pass; but if the player holding the ball for a place kick loses possession during a scrimmage down, it is a fumble and a loose ball; if during a free kick, the ball remains dead.  
**(A.R. 8-7-2:IV)**

**PENALTY – 10 yards, plus loss of down for fouls by Team A if the loss of down is not in conflict with other rules [S31 and S9] (Exception: No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick is beyond the neutral zone).**

## SECTION 5. Fighting

ARTICLE 1. a. Before the game, squad members in uniform and coaches shall not participate in a fight (Rule 2-32-1).

During the first half, players shall not participate in a fight.

**PENALTY – 15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot.**

**Automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules.**

**Disqualification for the remainder of the game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47].**

b. During the half-time intermission, squad members in uniform or coaches shall not participate in a fight.

During the second half, players shall not participate in a fight.

**PENALTY – 15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot.**

**Automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules.**

**Disqualification for the remainder of the game and the next game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47]. For fighting in the last game of a season, those with remaining eligibility shall serve suspensions during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

c. During either half, coaches and substitutes shall not leave their team area to participate in a fight, nor shall they participate in a fight in their team area.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules. Disqualification for the remainder of the game and the next game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47]. For fighting in the last game of a season, those with remaining eligibility shall serve suspensions during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

ARTICLE 2. a. If the squad member, coach or player is disqualified for fighting a second time during that season, he shall be disqualified for that game and suspended for the remainder of the season.

b. If a second fighting suspension occurs in the final game of a season, he shall be suspended for the first game of the next season for which he is eligible. This suspension is considered to be his first fight of that season.

ARTICLE 3. The referee will notify (in writing) his assigning agency of all disqualifications for fighting. The assigning agency becomes responsible for implementation of the penalty.

## SECTION 6. Flagrant Personal Fouls

### Player Ejection

ARTICLE 1. When a player is disqualified from the game due to a flagrant personal foul, BAFA shall where possible initiate a video review for possible additional sanctions before the next scheduled game.

### Initiating Contact/Targeting an Opponent

ARTICLE 2. When there is a foul called for initiating contact/targeting an opponent (Rules 9-1-3 and 9-1-4) that does not result in a player disqualification, there shall where possible be a video review by BAFA for possible additional sanctions before the next scheduled game.

### Foul Not Called

ARTICLE 3. If subsequent review of a game by BAFA reveals plays involving flagrant personal fouls that game officials did not call, BAFA may impose sanctions prior to the next scheduled game.