

The Kicking Game (2009)

(The game within the game)

Key (General Kick) Definitions

NF: 2-24-1: A kick is the *intentional* striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot.

NF: 2-22-2: A kick *ends* when a *player gains possession* or when the ball becomes *dead while not in player possession*.

(touched, muffed, batted, redirected **DOES NOT** end a kick)

NF: 2-27: A *muff* is the touching of a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession.

NF: 2-34: A ball in player *possession* is a live ball *held or controlled* by a player after it has been handed or snapped to him, or *after* he has *caught or recovered it*.

NF: 2-24-9: An *illegal kick* is any *intentional* striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot which *does not comply with Articles 3 and 4* (Free & Scrimmage Kicks). When the ball is *loose* following an illegal kick, *it is treated as a fumble*.

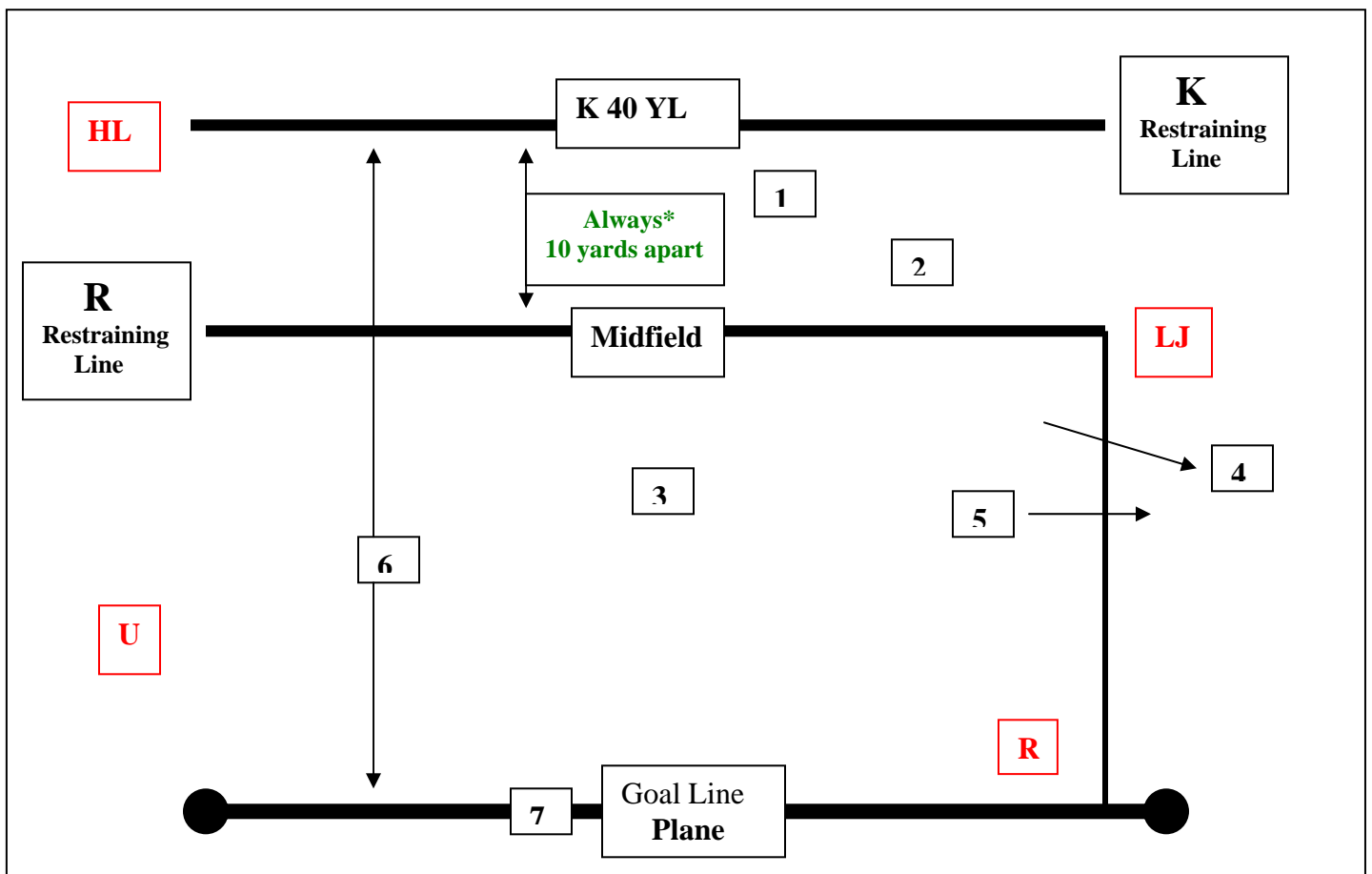
NF: 2-32-8: A *Kicker* is any player who legally punts, drop kicks or place kicks. A *player becomes a kicker when his knee, lower leg or foot makes contact with the ball*. He continues to be the kicker until he has had *reasonable opportunity to regain his balance* or until after a *free kick*, he has advanced 5 yards beyond his free-kick line *or the kick has touched the ground or any other player*.

NF: 2-41-6: The post-scrimmage kick spot (PSK) is the spot where *the kick ends*.....

NF: 8-5-3: It is a *Touchback* when (a-1) *ANY (ALL) Free Kick or Scrimmage Kick*; which is not a scoring attempt or which is a grounded 3-point field goal attempt *breaks the plane of R's goal line*

Free Kick Basics

1. The **Kicker** should not be blocked **within 5 yards** of the free kick, or before the free kick has touched the ground or another player.
2. First Touching ONLY applies **between restraining lines**. When a grounded kick crosses R's restraining line, it belongs to whoever recovers it. K may not advance a recovered kick. **NOTE:** (*BeanBag 1st touching ONLY*)
3. **K can NEVER "catch"** an (untouched) Free kick. That would be KCI, **anywhere**. When the kick has been grounded and traveled 10 yds, it can be recovered and possessed by either team, but **only R can advance it**.
4. A kick untouched, OOB is a foul by K (loose ball-previous spot enforcement) **NOTE:** (HL gives penalty signal to Press box) (*Case Book 6.1.8C: FK first touched by R who is OOB is considered a FK-OOB, foul by K*)
5. A kick, touched by R before going OOB, belongs to R at the inbounds spot.
6. R can make a Fair Catch **IN** or **BEYOND** the NZ to R's Goal Line.
7. **Until a kick has ENDED**, any kick touching R's goal line plane is a touchback.



Scrimmage Kick Basics

IN or Behind the Expanded NZ

What K Can Do	What R Can Do
Catch, Recover and Advance (including another kick)	Catch, Recover and Advance
Snapper gets additional protection	Cannot complete a Fair Catch in or behind the neutral zone. Contact, despite a signal is not a FC Infraction, but the ball is declared dead

Neutral Zone Expanded (2 Yards)

Beyond the Line

What K Can Do	What R Can Do
All fouls after ball has been kicked, until kick ended are loose ball fouls	Fouls after ball has been kicked are either loose ball or PSK
Fouls after ball possessed are basic spot	Fouls after ball possessed are basic spot
K can recover a kick (first touching) but cannot advance it, anywhere, anyhow	R can give up right to advance in exchange for uncontested opportunity to catch the kick. (Fair Catch)
K can “catch” a kick ONLY when no R player “is in position to catch the ball” (6-5-6-b-exc), otherwise KCI Still first touching	When R is first to touch a kick, then muffs it. Ball will belong to whomever recovers it
	Any R player signaling for a FC is prohibited from blocking until the Kick has ended .
	Once a FC signal is made, any R player catching the ball ends the play.
	FC signal after the kick has been GROUND ED is <u>INVALID</u> , after a player gains POSSESSION is <u>ILLEGAL</u>

Fair Catch

A Fair Catch is a **contract**, initiated by the receivers, whereby they agree to forego any opportunity to advance the kick in return for the unmolested opportunity to catch the kicked ball.

NF: 2-9-1: A FC is a **catch** by any receiver of a *free kick in or beyond the NZ* to the receiver's goal line, or a *scrimmage kick beyond the NZ* to the receiver's goal line.....

NF: 6-5-1: Any receiver may signal for a FC while *any legal* kick is in *flight*. Any receiver who has given a *valid or invalid* FC signal is prohibited from blocking until the **kick has ended**. (15 yards-Illegal Block, # 40)

Valid – Invalid – Illegal

NF: 2-9-3: A *valid* FC signal is the extending and lateral waving of *one arm*, at full arm's length above the head, *by any member* of the receiving team.

NF: 2-9-4: An *invalid* FC signal is any signal by a receiver before the kick is caught or recovered: (5 yards- Invalid/Illegal signal #32)

- That does not meet the requirements of a valid signal
- *After* the kick has **touched a receiver**
- *After* the kick has **touched the ground**

NF: 2-9-5: An *illegal* FC signal is any signal by a **runner**. (To become a runner, a receiver must have *already possessed* the ball by catching, or recovering it, which effectively **ends the kick**.) (5 Yards- Invalid/Illegal signal #32)

NF: 6-5-3: Only the receiver *who gives a valid FC signal is afforded protection*. If after a receiver signals, the *catch* is made by *a teammate*, it is **NOT a FC**, but the ball becomes **dead**.

NF: 6-5-4: When a FC is **made, or awarded**, R can choose *where* along the FC yardline **the ball will next be put in play**, whether by snap or Free Kick. Those *options remain in place* should there be a dead ball foul, or a foul or an IW occurs during the down and the **down is replayed**.

NF: 6-5-5: No receiver may **advance** the ball after a valid or invalid signal has been given by *any member* of the receiving team. (5 yards-Delay of Game # 21)

FC Summary:

- To make a FC team R must give a **valid** signal.
- Only Receivers **who have given a valid signal** are protected. Ball is dead should others catch, but not a FC
- Anytime a **valid, or invalid**, FC signal is given, the ball becomes dead when possession is obtained by either team beyond the NZ.
- After a valid signal, the ball **must be caught** to be a FC
- A ball that **touches the ground** is recovered, not a catch, not a FC.
- Scrimmage kick recovered **BEHIND** the NZ remains alive, even though R may have signaled.
- A FC cannot be made in the R End Zone.
- **FC cannot be made** behind the LOS on a Scrimmage Kick or behind K's Free kick line, but becomes dead if caught or recovered by R if a signal was given.
- **Any Receiver** who has given a **valid or invalid signal** is **prohibited from blocking** until the **kick has ended.**

Kick-Catching Interference

NF: 6-5-6: (Free Kick: **IN or BEYOND** NZ) (Scrimmage Kick: **BEYOND** NZ)

Members of "R" must be given an **unhindered opportunity** to catch the ball. "K" must not obstruct "R's" path to the (airborne) ball. **Whether or not a FC Signal has been given.**

FC Protection **ENDS** when the Kick is **touched (NOT "caught") by R.** If he muffs it, he can be (legally) contacted. (See Case Book 6.5.6.Situation E "Ruling" and NF: 2-4-2: "Catching is always preceded by touching the ball. .

Free Kick: "**K**" can **NEVER** legally touch an untouched **free kick** in flight.

Scrimmage Kick: "K may catch, touch or bat a **scrimmage kick** in flight beyond the NZ **if no player of R is in position to catch the ball**"

First Touching

First touching is a *violation* which benefits the Receiving Team by giving them the *option to take possession* of the ball at the spot of first touching. First touching applies only *when Team K* touches the kick when they are *not entitled to possess it*.

Scrimmage kick: Only *beyond* the ENZ (NF: 6-2-5)
BeanBag where “K” touches.

Free kick: Only *between* Free Kick lines (NF: 6-1-6)
BeanBag only WHERE “K” First touches – When “R” touches, wind the clock

Momentum Exception

NF: 8-5-2 (Exception): Allows for the possibility a receiver may catch or recover a kick inside his 5 yard line and his momentum carries him into his own End Zone. If the ball becomes dead in the EZ, or is fumbled OOB from the EZ without returning to the field of play, R will put the ball in play from the spot of the catch.

Post-Scrimmage Kick Enforcement (PSK)

PSK enforcement allows the receiving team to *retain possession* of the ball after they have forced the opponents to punt, even though the receiving team commits certain fouls *before possession actually changes*.

Fouls committed during a *scrimmage kick*, by *either team*, are *loose ball fouls*, which require previous spot enforcement *EXCEPT* KCI, by the defense, and when *PSK requirements are met*, for *receiving team* fouls. Requirements are: (NF: 2-16-h)

1. During *Scrimmage kick plays*, other than try or *successful* field goal
2. When the *kick crosses the Expanded NZ*
3. (Foul occurs) *Beyond the Expanded NZ*
4. *Before* the End of the kick
5. “K” does *not have possession* of the ball when the down ends and will *not be next to put the ball in play*.

Roughing Kicker, Holder, Snapper

NF: 2-32-7: “A holder is a player who controls the ball on the ground or on a tee.”

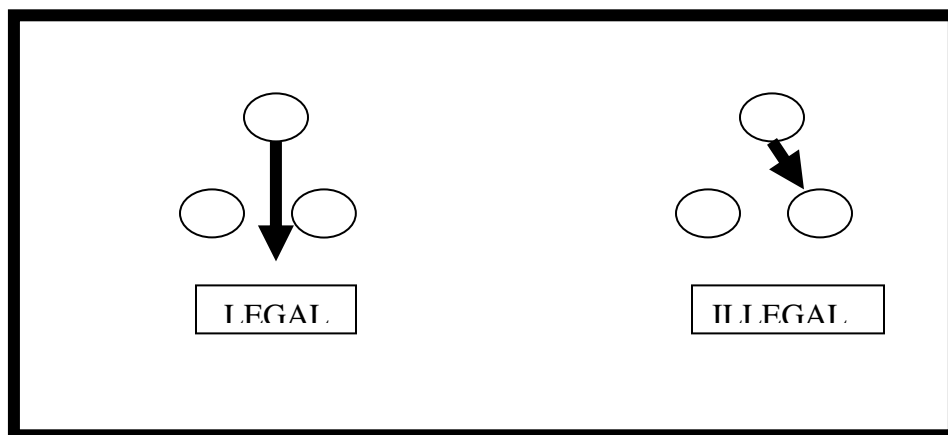
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NF: 9-4-5: A defensive player *shall neither run into* the kicker nor holder, which is contact that displaces the kicker or holder without roughing; *nor block tackle or charge into* into the kicker or holder of a scrimmage kick , or the place kick holder, other than when:

1. **Contact is unavoidable** because it is not reasonably certain a kick will be made.
2. The defense touches the kick near the kicker **and contact is unavoidable**.
3. Contact is slight and is partially caused by the movement of the kicker
4. **Contact is caused** by R being blocked into the kicker or holder **by K**

The **KEY** consideration about any contact is, was it **AVOIDABLE**

NF: 9-4-6: A Defensive player shall not **charge directly** into the snapper when the offensive team is in a **scrimmage-kick formation**.



GENERAL CAUTIONS

- First Touching *does apply* to unsuccessful field goal attempts.
- Field Goal attempts are *scrimmage kicks*, and all kicking rules apply, EXCEPT scoring kicks remain alive after breaking the goal plane of “R” goal line until ruled successful or unsuccessful.
 - FG attempts ending in the field of play are administered like any scrimmage kick ending in the field of play.
 - Unsuccessful FG attempts breaking the goal line plane, are *touchbacks*, Subsequent spot is the ALWAYS the 20YL (*NOT the previous spot.*)
- A Kick *try ends* whenever R gains possession or when it is otherwise apparent the kick will not score.
- When R possesses (catch or recovery) a kick and *then fumbles* the ball, we are no longer dealing with kicking rules, the ball remains alive and whoever recovers the fumble can advance it.

FORCE

NF: 2-13-1: Force is**Initial force** results from a carry, fumble, kick, pass or snap. **After** a fumble, kick or backwards pass **has been grounded**, a new force **may** result from a bat, an **illegal** kick, or a muff.

NF: 2-13-2: **Responsibility** for forcing the ball..... **is attributed to the player** who carries, snaps, fumbles or kicks **unless** a new force is applied to either a backwards pass, kick or fumble **that has been grounded**.

NF: 2-13-3: The **muffing or batting** of a pass, kick or fumble **in flight** is **NOT CONSIDERED A NEW FORCE**.

NF: 2-13-4 Force is **NOT** a factor (a) **On kicks going into R’s EZ**, since these kicks are **always a Touchback** regardless of who supplied the force.

Scrimmage Kick Formation

NF: 2-14-2: A scrimmage kick formation is one in which **no player is in position to receive a hand to hand snap** from between the snapper's legs, and at the snap:

- A. A player is in position with a knee on the ground **7 yards or more** behind the LOS, in position to be the holder and receive the long snap with another player **3 yards or less** behind that player in position to attempt a place kick.

Or

- B. A player is **10 yards or more** behind the LOS and in position to receive a long snap

Numbering Exceptions

NF: 7-2-5-Exceptions 1 & 2

At the snap at least 7 "A" players must be on the LOS, of which **5** must be numbered **50-79**.

1. **On 1st, 2nd and 3rd Downs**, the Snapper may be a player numbered 1-49 or 80-99 and "A" is required to have 4 linemen numbered 50-79. **The Snapper (in the game under this exception) MUST be between the ends**, and is an **Ineligible** receiver (during the down, unless a forward pass is touched by "B")
2. **On 4th down (ONLY)** ANY "A" player, numbered 1-49 or 80-99 **may take the position** of ANY "A" player numbered 50-79. A player in the game under this exception **must assume an initial position on his LOS between the ends** and he remains an **Ineligible** forward pass receiver. (during the down, unless a forward pass is touched by "B")
3. Note: **if there are 5 otherwise appropriately numbered linemen in a scrimmage kick formation**, a snapper wearing an eligible number, snapping from the end of the line, would be eligible by both number and position.

Violations of the Numbering exception are considered "Illegal Numbering" (S-19)