

ANEFO

**RULE 10:
PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

September 15, 2025

WHEN FLAGS ARE THROWN....

CALLING OFFICIAL MUST KNOW:

- Fouling team (offense/defense or kickers/receivers)
- What foul occurred (holding, offside, personal foul)
- Classification of foul (live-ball or dead-ball)
- Type of play when it occurred (loose-ball play vs. running play)
- Where it occurred
- The result of the play

REFEREE MUST KNOW:

- Enforcement spot
- Penalty

Too often we think of Rule 10 as the sole province of the Referee. But it's not:

- A. Correct reporting to ref is essential to proper enforcement
- B. There will be elements of play that Ref didn't see (result of play)
- C. A sanity check is always needed. Especially on odd enforcements

ENFORCEMENT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ENTIRE CREW



1. TYPE OF PLAY: THERE ARE TWO TYPES...
LOOSE BALL PLAY & RUNNING PLAY

A *LOOSE BALL PLAY* is action during:

- A free kick or scrimmage kick
- A legal forward pass
- The run or runs which PRECEDE any of the above

The basic spot for loose ball plays is the PREVIOUS SPOT

LOOSE BALL PLAY - PASS

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

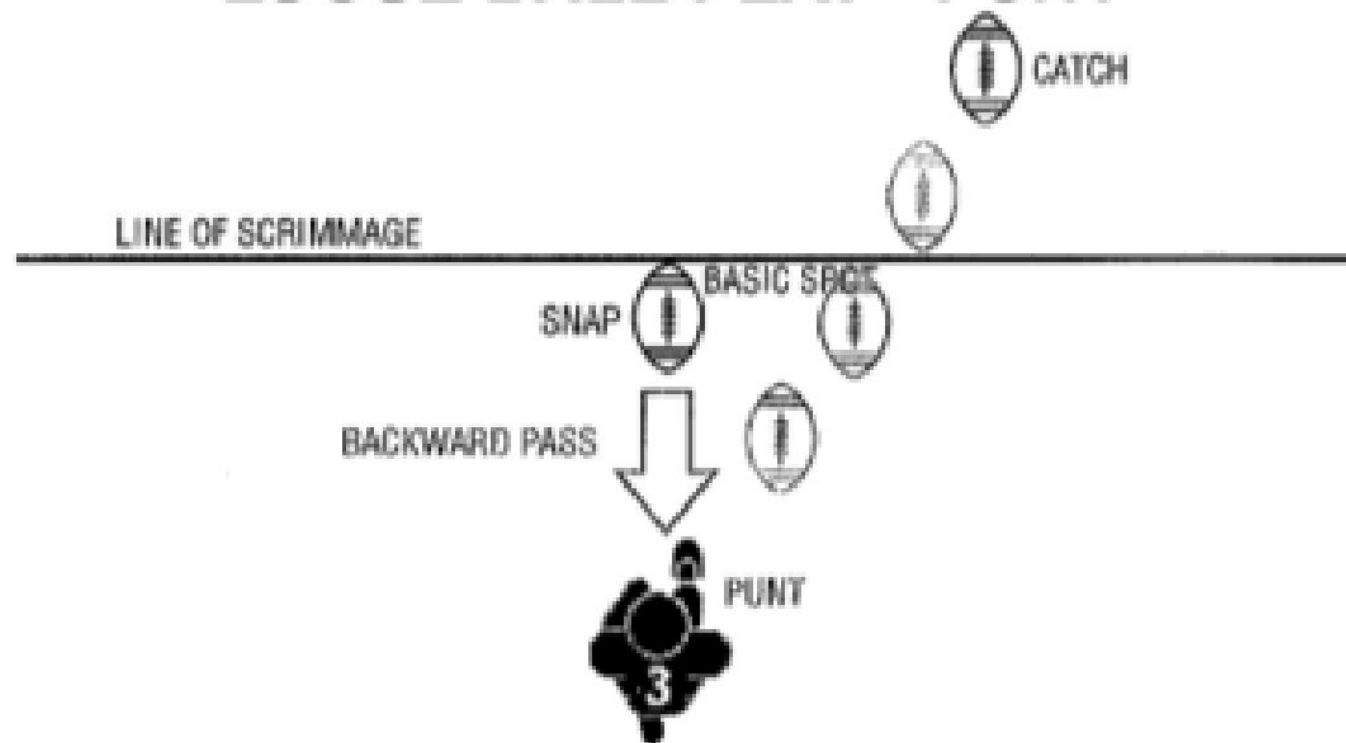
SNAP  BASIC SPOT

RUN 

 CATCH

A RUN FOLLOWED BY A LEGAL FORWARD PASS. BOTH ARE PART OF ONE LOOSE BALL PLAY.

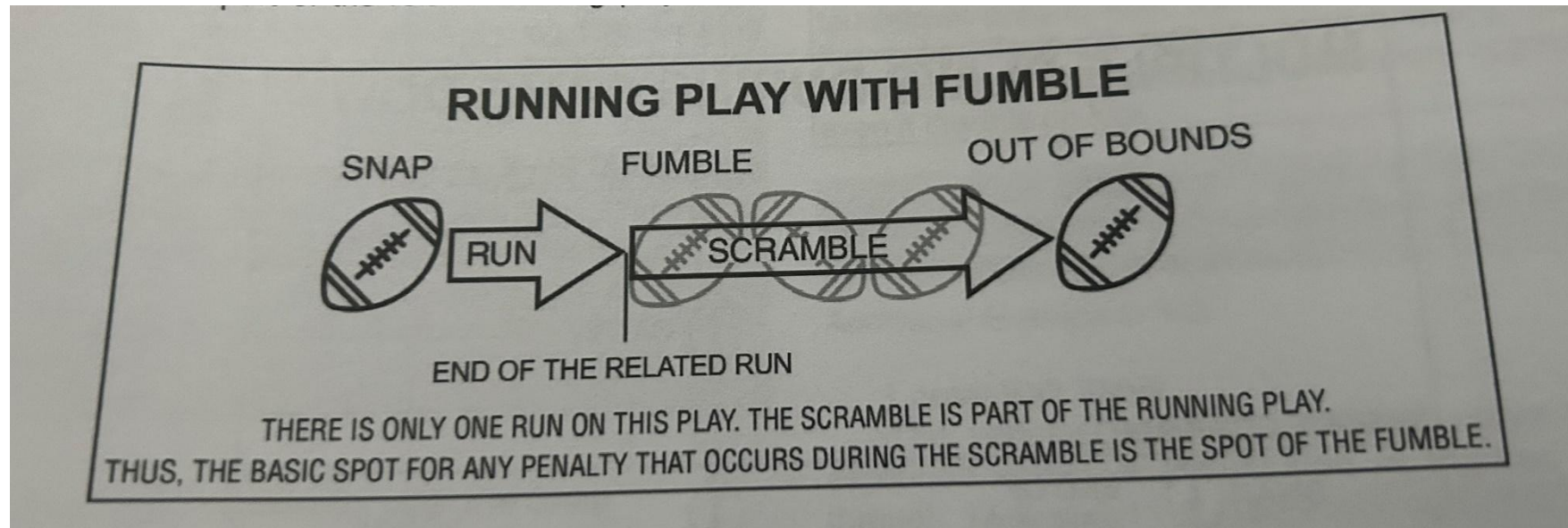
LOOSE BALL PLAY - PUNT



A BACKWARD PASS FOLLOWED BY A SCRIMMAGE KICK BOTH ARE PART OF ONE LOOSE BALL PLAY

A *RUNNING PLAY* is all live ball action that ISN'T a loose ball play

New in 2024: A backward pass (including the snap), illegal kick or fumble made by Team A in or behind the neutral zone prior to a change of team possession, and the run or runs which precede any of the above, are running plays.



There can be multiple running plays on a down, but only one loose ball play.

2. RUNNING PLAY BASIC SPOTS / OFFENSIVE FOUL

Need two things: spot of foul and end of play

TABLE 10-4 - NFHS PENALTY ENFORCEMENT				
FOUL BY	SPOT OF FOUL	END OF PLAY	BASIC SPOT	SUMMARY
OFFENSE	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	<p>If ANY/EITHER element is Behind = Previous Spot</p> <p>If BOTH elements are beyond = Similar to All-But-One Principle</p>
	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage		
	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage		
	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	<p>Foul Behind End of Run = Spot of Foul</p> <p>Foul Beyond End of Run = End of run</p>	
DEFENSE	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	<p>If play ends BEHIND line of scrimmage = Previous spot</p> <p>If play ends BEYOND line of scrimmage = End of run</p>
	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	End of Run	
	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	
	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	End of Run	

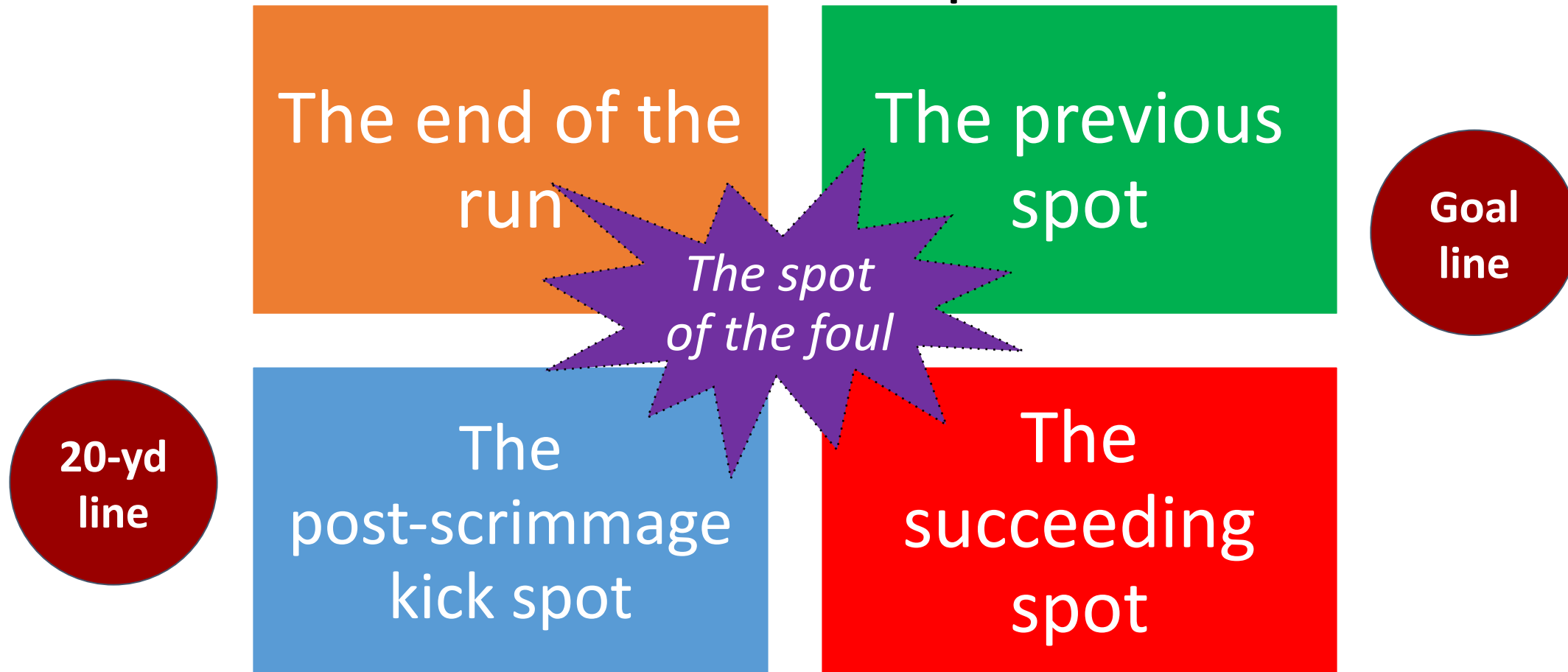
2. RUNNING PLAY BASIC SPOTS / DEFENSIVE FOUL

Only need to know end of play

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	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	
	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	
	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Foul Behind End of Run = Spot of Foul Foul Beyond End of Run = End of run	
DEFENSE	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	<p>If play ends BEHIND line of scrimmage = Previous spot</p> <p>If play ends BEYOND line of scrimmage = End of run</p>
	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	End of Run	
	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	
	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	End of Run	

UNLESS THERE'S SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT,
THE BASIC SPOT IS THE ENFORCEMENT SPOT.

Possible basic spots:



EXAMPLES

2/15, B-30. After the snap, cornerback B33 tackles receiver A88 at the B-28.....

Play 1: QB A1 is sacked at the B-40

Play 2: QB A1 advances to the B-10

Play 3: A11 throws incomplete pass

Play 4: A1 completes pass to A80 who is tackled at the B-16

Play 5: A1 completes pass to A80 who is tackled at the B-6

**WHAT TYPE OF PLAY IS IT? WHERE DID THE FOUL OCCUR?
WHAT IS THE BASIC SPOT?**

2/15, B-30. After the snap, cornerback B33 tackles receiver A88 at the B-28. (Defensive holding before pass is in air)

Play 1: QB A1 is sacked at the B-40 : *Team B foul on running play that ended behind NZ = prev spot. 2nd & 5, B-20*

Play 2: QB A1 advances to the B-10 : *Team B foul on running play that ended beyond NZ = end of run. 1st & G, B-5*

Play 3: A11 throws incomplete pass : *Team B foul on pass play = prev spot. 2nd & 5, B-20*

Play 4: A1 completes pass to A80 who is tackled at the B-16 : *Team B foul on pass play = prev spot. OPTION: 2nd & 5, B-20 or decline (3rd & 1, B-16)*

A1 completes pass to A80 who is tackled at the B-6 : *Team B foul on pass play = prev spot (declined). 1st & G, B-6*

EXAMPLES (TEAM A FOULS)

Play 1: 1/10, midfield. A1 runs to the B-40. A88 holds at the A-45.

Play 2: 1/10, midfield. A1 runs to the A-45. A88 holds at the B-45.

Play 3: 1/10, midfield. A1 runs to the B-30. A88 holds at the B-25.

For specific non-contact fouls, the basic spot is the SPOT OF THE FOUL....

Illegal forward pass. 5yds + LOD. (See [video](#) 5:57)

Illegal batting / kicking. 10 yds, but no LOD. (See [video](#) 8:13)

- . Be sure to distinguish between these two with regard to LOD. Both special when they happen behind NZ, but no LOD for the illegal bat/kick.
- . Is illegal touching by an ineligible lineman a spot foul behind LOS or previous spot enforcement?
- . These can be tricky, but remember: ANY foul committed by A in their endzone = safety by enforcement

POST SCRIMMAGE KICK ENFORCEMENT

5 ELEMENTS REQUIRED. THE FOUL MUST OCCUR:

1. During scrimmage kick plays, other than a try or a good FG
2. During a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the expanded neutral zone
3. Beyond the expanded neutral zone
4. *Before the end of the kick. (If after, then it's just a foul during a running play.)*
5. And K will not be next to put the ball in play

Note: This is why we need a bag at the end of the kick. And for a touch by Team K. Not for a muff by Team R

4th & 5 at the R-24. FG attempt is partially blocked at the LOS. While ball rolls downfield, R44 blindsides blocks K23 at the R-16. The ball goes out of bounds (a) at the R-6, or (b) through the end zone.

WHAT DO WE HAVE? Personal foul on Team R during a kick play....

4th & 5 at the R-24. FG attempt is partially blocked at the LOS. While ball rolls downfield, R44 blindsides blocks K23 at the R-16. The ball goes out of bounds (a) at the R-6, or (b) through the end zone.

THIS IS A PSK FOUL.

(a) R ball, 1/10 from the R-3

(b) R ball, 1/10 from the R-8

SPECIAL ENFORCEMENTS

- Free kick out of bounds untouched by R (wing officials on kickoff should know the options to give to coaches)
- Kick catch interference (spot foul OR previous)
- Foul by the non-scoring team on successful try or FG (kickoff or OT)
- Fouls by non-scoring team during or after a touchdown (try or kickoff; *not* carry into OT)
- Roughing the passer/snapper/kicker/holder (RTK is only prev spot. It can't be PSK)
- Post-scrimmage kick fouls
- Fouls by K during a free or scrimmage kick down prior to the end of the legal kick (except KCI)

CARRY-OVERS

Carry-Over Penalties

Play	Penalty is for	Can be enforced on/in		
		Try	Succeeding KO	Overtime
Touchdown (8-2-4)	Live-ball Foul % #	Yes	Yes	No
Touchdown (8-2-5)	Dead-ball Foul Before Try	Yes	Yes	No
Try (8-3-5b)	Live-Ball Foul #	Yes	Yes	Yes
Try (10-4-5b)	Dead-ball Foul After Try *	NA	Yes	Yes
Field Goal (8-4-3)	Live-ball Foul Dead-ball Foul After Field Goal #	NA	Yes	Yes

Table 11-4

- % Foul must occur after any change of possession unless nonplayer or unsportsmanlike.
- * Does not apply if try is replayed.
- # Includes nonplayer and unsportsmanlike fouls (live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls).

AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWNS

Roughing the passer*
Roughing the kicker
Roughing the snapper
Roughing the holder

**tack on to dead ball spot if no change of possession*

LOSS OF DOWN

Intentional grounding
Illegal forward pass
Illegal forward handoff
Illegal touching by ineligible (prev spot)

LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL

- Live balls never offset dead ball fouls
- Dead ball fouls / unsportsmanlike / bench-sideline fouls are enforced at succeeding spot: “*THE DOWN COUNTS!*”
- Dead ball fouls by same team are enforced separately and in order of occurrence
- Dead ball 15 yard penalties and live ball fouls treated as dead ball fouls cancel if they’re equal number. (3 on A and 1 on B? Enforce 2 penalties on A)
- Be careful with order of occurrence. Example: 3rd & 6 at B-10. A11 is tackled at the B-6. B99 piles on. Then A77 rips B99’s helmet off. RULING?

CHANGE OF POSSESSION: “CLEAN HANDS”

If there’s a change of possession during the down and the team that winds up with the football did not foul before they gained FINAL possession, they may keep the ball by declining penalties for their opponent’s fouls. >>>

Be careful not to automatically offset these! (see [vid 19:11](#))

1/10, A-4. Runner A44 fumbles on his 2-yd line. B99 intentionally kicks the loose ball out the back of the end zone. When B99 kicked the ball it was (a) at the A-2 or (b) in Team A's endzone

Type of play? Result of play? Is it a foul in both cases? Options? (This is prime example of how penalty enforcement dictates and is affected by all aspects of a given play.)

1/10, A-4. Runner A44 fumbles on his 2-yd line. B99 intentionally kicks the loose ball out the back of the end zone. When B99 kicked the ball it was (a) at the A-2 or (b) in Team A's endzone

- (a) Touchback. Penalty declined. A ball 1/10, A-20
- (b) Safety. Penalty accepted. A ball 1/10, A-14

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- It's the entire crew's responsibility to get enforcement right. Not just the referee.
- Get in the rule book; get in the case book; get in the Redding Guide!
- We are a team out there. If you think something is about to be enforced incorrectly, speak up. (And referees, be receptive to the input 😊)
- Yes we want to keep the flow of the game moving, but we don't want to rush enforcements. ESPECIALLY when they involve something out of the ordinary. Take your time.
- Explain unusual situations to coaches. Have another official present.
- Kevin should have to sit in on the next backjudge breakout session