



Use of the Beanbag

References:

Football Officiating Mechanics Illustrated, NMOA 2022
NFHS Football Rules Book 2022

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Use of the Beanbag

Mechanics Book p14

- The beanbag is used to mark spots, other than the spot of a foul, which may later be needed as a reference point.
- Crews may use a blue, black or white beanbag (all officials must have the same color)
- The beanbag is not to be used as a substitute for hustle
- Beanbags should be dropped and not thrown

Example: A beanbag may be dropped at a spot near the sideline when an official needs to retrieve a ball or escort player(s) back to the field from beyond the sideline. In this instance, the beanbag should be dropped only after the official has squared off to the spot.



Fumble

Mark the End of a Run

- The spot of the fumble must be marked in the event a penalty occurs and that spot is needed to determine where the run ended.
- Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond the neutral zone, but many officials bag all fumbles out of habit.
- Remember that anytime the ball becomes loose behind the line of scrimmage, all the action from the snap until the ball is no longer loose are part of the loose ball play. The basic spot for fouls that occur during a loose ball play is the previous spot (hence no beanbag required).



First Touching on Kicks 6-1, 6-2

- During both free and scrimmage kicks, there are times when it is improper for team K to touch a ball that has been kicked. That is known as “first touching” and it applies only when team K touches the ball when it is not entitled to possession.
- On **free kicks**, if team K touches the ball before the ball crosses team R’s free-kick line and before it is touched there by any team R player, the spot must be marked with the beanbag.
- For a **scrimmage kick**, the spot must be marked if team K touches the ball in the field of play beyond the line before team R touches it.
- The spot must be marked because team R may have the right to take the ball at that spot.



First Touching on Kicks 6-2 (cont.)

- If a scrimmage kick ends between the goal lines, the covering official must mark the spot with a beanbag.
- That is in case **post-scrimmage kick enforcement (PSK)** is needed on a foul.
- The Back Judge (crew of five) or Line Judge (crew of four) should use **two different-colored beanbags**: one for marking the end of a kick and the other than for marking first touching.



Momentum Exception

- The momentum exception allows a defender or kick receiver to make a play without fear of giving up a safety.
- When a defensive player:
 - intercepts an opponent's forward pass;
 - intercepts or recovers an opponent's fumble or backward pass;
 - or a team R player catches or recovers a scrimmage kick or free kick between his five yard line and the goal line,and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession or it goes out of bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered or the kick was caught or recovered.
- The bean bagged spot might also be used to enforce a penalty that occurs after possession was obtained.



Out of Bounds

- The beanbag can also be used to mark the out of bounds spot on punts.
- On free kicks, if the ball is kicked out of bounds untouched, it is a foul and the spot is marked with a flag.
- The hat (rather than the beanbag) is used when certain players go out of bounds during a play. If a player is pushed or blocked off the field, he may legally return and participate as long as he immediately reenters; that spot does not need to be marked. However, if a player of team A or team K goes out of bounds before a change of possession, the spot should be marked. It is not a foul unless he returns and the return spot should be marked with a flag. The hat demonstrates the covering official was on top of the play



Inadvertent Whistle 4-2-3

When an official inadvertently blows a whistle, causing the ball to become dead, **the covering official must drop his beanbag at the spot of the ball when the whistle was blown.**

4-2-3a: The down shall be replayed if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while a legal forward pass or snap is in flight or during a legal kick.

4-2-3b: The team last in possession may choose to either put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while the ball is loose following a backward pass, fumble, illegal forward pass or illegal kick.



Inadvertent Whistle 4-2-3 (cont.)

4-2-3c: The team in possession may choose to either accept the results of the play at the dead-ball spot or replay the down if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while the ball is in player possession.

4-2-3d: The penalty shall be administered as determined by the basic spot and takes precedence over inadvertent whistle administration if, during a down, a live-ball foul occurs prior to the inadvertent whistle and the penalty is accepted.



Who Typically Drops a Beanbag

- Wings usually have the beanbag for fumbles as they have the best view of the runner's forward progress or knee down
- Back Judge/Line Judge mark the end of the scrimmage kick (with a different color beanbag)
- Umpire or Referee may beanbag the passer's forward foot who throws a pass near the line of scrimmage (Referee will drop a flag if the passer throws the ball with a foot or feet beyond the neutral zone 7-5-2)
- Umpire could also have a bean bag on a fumble in a situation where other officials are screened and can't see the fumble.

Example: A short pass, catch and fumble to the slot receiver running away from the HL toward the center of the field parallel to the LOS, behind the offensive line (LJ and BJ view is blocked by players on the line)