**2023 NFHS Rule Book – Rule 10 – Enforcement of Penalties**

**SECTION 1 PROCEDURE AFTER A FOUL**

ART. 1 ... When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both teams. He shall inform the designated representative of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. In case of a double foul, the designated representative is not consulted since the penalties offset. The choice of options may not be revoked. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged timeout is granted either team.

ART. 2 ... When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free kick or snap, the covering official shall not permit the ball to become alive. The referee shall notify both teams, and the designated representative of the offended team will be presented with the options and the effect of acceptance or declination on the down and distance to be gained. The designated representative may accept or decline the penalty.

ART. 3 ... When a live-ball foul by one team is followed by a dead-ball foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

ART. 4 ... When the same team commits a live-ball foul followed by one or more dead-ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

ART. 5 ... Enforcement of a penalty cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the prescribed penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the spot of enforcement to the goal line.

ART. 6 ... The following fouls by A include loss of the right to replay a down:

a. Illegally handing the ball forward.

b. Illegal forward pass.

c. Illegal touching of forward pass by an ineligible.

ART. 7 ... The following fouls by Team B give Team A an automatic first down:

a. Roughing the kicker or holder.

b. Roughing the passer.

c. Roughing the snapper.

**SECTION 2 DOUBLE AND MULTIPLE FOULS**

ART. 1 ... It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, during the same live-ball period in which:

a. There is no change of team possession, unless all fouls committed by R are post-scrimmage kick fouls; or

b. There is a change of team possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession unless all fouls committed by R are post-scrimmage kick fouls;

or

c. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul at any time during the down.

In (a), (b) or (c), the penalties cancel, and the down is replayed.

ART. 2 ... If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession and the play does not have a post-scrimmage kick foul, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided:

a. The foul by the team last gaining possession is not prior to the final change of possession, and

b. The team last gaining possession declines the penalty for its opponent's foul(s), other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul.

In this case, the team that was not last in possession has no penalty options until the team last in possession has made its penalty decision on the fouls prior to the change of possession. After that decision by the team last in possession, the team not last in possession may decline or accept the penalty for the foul by the team last in possession or choose which penalty to have enforced in the case that the team last in possession committed more than one foul following the change.

ART. 3 ... If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession and all R fouls are post-scrimmage kick fouls, then R may retain the ball, provided R declines the penalty for K's foul(s), other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In this case, K has no penalty options until R has made its penalty decision. After that decision by R, K may decline or accept the penalty for the foul by R or choose which penalty to have enforced in the case that R committed more than one foul following the change.

ART. 4 ... When two or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or un­ sportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team (multiple fouls), only one penalty may be enforced. The designated representative of the offended team may choose which one shall be administered, or all penalties may be declined. When a team commits a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul during that same down, it is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for the other foul.

ART. 5 ... Enforcement of penalties for unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball fouls:

a. Penalties for dead-ball fouls, other than when both teams commit unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls prior to the completion of penalty administration for those fouls, are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. A dead-ball foul is not coupled with a live-ball foul or another dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

b. If both teams commit unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls prior to the completion of penalty administration for those fouls, the distance penalty for an equal number of 15-yard unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls will offset. Any remaining penalties will be enforced separately and in the order of occurrence.

c. A disqualified player or nonplayer shall be removed.

ART. 6 ... A foul during a try is not paired with a dead-ball foul to create a

double or multiple foul.

**SECTION 3 TYPES OF PLAY**

ART. 1 ... A loose-ball play is action during:

a. A free kick or scrimmage kick, other than those defined in 2-33-1a.

b. A legal forward pass.

c. A backward pass (including the snap), illegal kick or fumble made by A from in or behind the neutral zone and prior to a change of team possession.

**NOTE**: The run(s) which precedes such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble is (are) considered part of the action during a loose-ball play.

ART. 2 ... A running play is any action not included under Article 1, other than those defined in 2-33-1a.

ART. 3 ... The end of the run is:

a. Where the ball becomes dead in the runner's possession.

b. Where the runner loses possession if his run is followed by a loose ball.

c. The spot of the catch or recovery when the momentum rule is in effect.

**SECTION 4 BASIC SPOTS**

ART. 1 ... If a foul occurs during a down, the basic spot is determined by the action that occurs during the down. This is the basic spot for penalty enforcement.

ART. 2 ... The basic spot is the previous spot unless 8-5-2c applies for:

a. A foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick

b. A foul which occurs behind the line of scrimmage during a loose ball play, as defined in 10-3-1. See 10-5-5 for special enforcement on roughing the passer. See 10-5-1b for special enforcement on kick-catching interference.

c. A foul which occurs during a down in which a legal kick occurs, and an inadvertent whistle ends the down prior to possession by either team.

d. A foul by A or b when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no

change of possession.

e. A foul by A that occurs behind the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends beyond the

line of scrimmage.

f. A foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends behind the

line of scrimmage; and

g. A foul by A or b when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage before a change of

possession.

**EXCEPTION:** The basic spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the succeeding spot for fouls by K during a legal free or scrimmage kick down (other than kick catch interference) prior to the end of the kick when K will not be next to put the ball in play.

ART. 3 ... The basic spot is the spot where the kick ends when R commits a post-scrimmage kick foul

(2-16-2h). R fouls behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

ART. 4 … The basic spot is the spot of the foul for:

a. Illegal batting or illegal kicking when the foul occurs behind the end of the run or related run;

b. Illegal participation as in 9-6-4a and 9-6-4g;

c. An illegal forward pass as in 7-5-2c and intentional grounding as in 7-5-2d;

d. A foul by the team in possession that occurs behind the end of the run or related run following a

change of possession;

e. When A commits any foul in his end zone for which the penalty is accepted(8-5-2c); and

f. A foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when:

1. The run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage; and

2. The foul occurs behind the end of the run or related run.

ART. 5 ... The basic spot is the succeeding spot for:

a. An unsportsmanlike foul.

b. A dead-ball foul.

c. A nonplayer foul.

d. Following a change of possession when the final result is a touchback.

**NOTE**: The succeeding spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the subsequent kickoff as in 8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 and 8-2-5.

ART. 6 ... The basic spot is the end of the run or related run for:

a. A foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage;

b. A foul that occurs beyond the end of the run or related run following a change of possession; and

c. A foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when:

1. The run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage; and

2. The foul occurs in advance of the end of the run or related run.

ART. 7 ... The basic spot is the 20-yard line for fouls following a change of possession which are committed by either team when the opponent of the team in possession at the time of the foul is responsible for forcing the ball across the goal line of the team in possession, and the related run ends in the end zone and is followed by a loose ball, regardless of where the loose ball becomes dead.

ART. 8 ... The basic spot is the goal line for fouls following a change of possession, which are committed during running plays by the opponent of the team in possession at the time of the foul when the team in possession is responsible for forcing the ball across its own goal line, and the related run ends in the end zone.

ART. 9 . . . The basic spot is the spot where the related run ends for a foul which occurs during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 unless the provisions of 10-4-2 through 10-4-8, or 10-5 apply.

**SECTION 5 SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT RULES**

ART. 1 ... The following fouls have special enforcement provisions and options for the offended team:

a. Free kick out of bounds untouched by R. (6-1-9)

b. Kick-catching interference. (6-5-6)

c. Unfair acts. (9-9)

d. A foul by the opponent of the scoring team on a successful try. (8-3-5)

e. A foul by the opponents of the scoring team on a successful field goal. (8-4-3)

f. Fouls that occur during or after a touchdown scoring play. (8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 and 8-2-5)

g. Roughing the passer. (9-4-4)

h. Roughing the kicker or holder. (9-4-5)

i. Roughing the snapper. (9-4-6)

j. Fouls by K during a free or scrimmage kick down prior to the end of the legal kick.

(10-4-2 EXCEPTION)

ART. 2 ... The score is nullified if the penalty is accepted for a foul, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, by A which occurs during a down resulting in a successful try, field goal or touchdown.

ART. 3 ... If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind its goal line, it is a safety.

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| **Table 10-4** | | | | |
| **Summary of many fouls that can occur during running plays and their penalties and basic spots unless otherwise specified by rule** | | | | |
| Enforcement provisions apply to all player fouls, and the committee philosophy is based on the fact that a team is given the advantage of the distance which is gained without the assistance of a foul. All fouls are penalized from the basic spot unless the spot is otherwise specified by rule. | | | | |
| The type of play has significance if a foul occurs. If a foul does occur, the game officials must know the type of play as defined in 2-33, as this will aid in determining the basic spot of enforcement when the spot is otherwise specified by rule. Recent changes to 10-4 specify the data needed by the game official regarding the spot of the foul and the result of the play to help guide penalty enforcement.  This table is not intended to encompass all fouls and possible options, but to focus on certain fouls that occur during running plays. | | | | |
| **FOUL BY** | **SPOT OF FOUL** | **END OF PLAY** | **BASIC SPOT** | **REFERENCE** |
| A | Behind Line of Scrimmage | Behind Line of Scrimmage | Previous Spot | 10-4-2d |
| A | Behind Line of Scrimmage | Beyond Line of Scrimmage | Previous Spot | 10-4-2e |
| A | Beyond Line of Scrimmage | Behind Line of Scrimmage | Previous Spot | 10-4-2f |
| A  A | Beyond Line of Scrimmage  Beyond Line of Scrimmage | Beyond Line of Scrimmage  Beyond Line of Scrimmage | Spot of Foul for Foul Behind End of Run or Related Run  End of Run or Related Run for Foul Beyond End of Run or Related Run | 10-4-4f  10-4-6c |
| B | Behind Line of Scrimmage | Behind Line of Scrimmage | Previous Spot | 10-4-2d |
| B | Beyond Line of Scrimmage | Behind Line of Scrimmage | Previous Spot | 10-4-5f |
| B | Behind Line of Scrimmage | Beyond Line of Scrimmage | End of Run or Related Run | 10-4-6a |
| B | Beyond Line of Scrimmage | Beyond Line of Scrimmage | End of Run or Related Run | 10-4-6a |