

The Momentum Exception

The Momentum Rule states that it is neither a safety nor a touchback if a “B” or “R” team player is inside his 5 yard line when he:

1. Intercepts a forward pass
2. Catches or recovers a kick
3. Catches or recovers a backward pass or fumble

and his momentum carries him into the end zone where he is downed or loses possession of the ball, which then goes out of bounds in the end zone. The ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where possession is obtained.

It’s important to note the result of the play is a safety if the “B” or “R” player obtains possession of the ball outside the five yard line and his momentum carries him into the end zone.

Remember, for the exception to apply, original momentum must be the cause of the ball entering the zone.

What happens after the ball enters the end zone is inconsequential providing the ball never returns to the field of play and the defensive team has possession at the end of the down. Remember, the key to “leaving the end zone” is the location of the ball. If a player intercepts a pass on his one yard line, is carried into the end zone by his original momentum and then after running around, breaks the plane of the goal line with part of his body, but not the ball – the exception still applies.

What happens in the end zone doesn’t matter – as long as the defensive team retains the ball.

Keys:

1. MUST bean bag spot of possession inside 5 yard line
2. “B” or “R” can run ball out of end zone
3. If a player of the team which intercepts, catches, or recovers the ball commits a foul in the end zone, it may be a safety.