

RULE 6 KICKS

SECTION 4. Opportunity to Catch a Kick

Interference With Opportunity

ARTICLE 1. A player of the receiving team within the boundary lines attempting to catch a kick, and so located that he could have caught a free kick or a scrimmage kick that is beyond the neutral zone, must be given an unimpeded opportunity to catch the kick (A.R. 6-3-1-III, A.R. 6-4-1-V and A.R. 6-4-1-X).

- a. This protection terminates when the kick touches the ground, when any player of Team B muffs a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone, or when any player of Team B muffs a free kick in the field of play or in the end zone (Rule 6-5-1-a) (A.R. 6-4-1-IV).
- b. If interference with a potential receiver is the result of a player being blocked by an opponent, it is not a foul.
- c. It is an interference foul if the kicking team contacts the potential receiver before, or simultaneous to, his first touching the ball (A.R. 6-4-1-II, III, VII and IX). When in question, it is an interference foul.

PENALTY - For foul between the goal lines: Receiving team's ball, first down, 15 yards beyond the spot of the foul for an interference foul S33]. For foul behind the goal line: Award a touchback and penalize from the succeeding spot. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].

SECTION 5. Fair Catch

Dead Where Caught

ARTICLE 1. a. When a Team B player makes a fair catch, the ball becomes dead where caught and belongs to Team B at that spot.

- b. When a valid fair catch signal is made, the unimpeded opportunity to catch a free or scrimmage kick is extended to a player who muffs the kick and still has an opportunity to complete the catch. This protection terminates when the kick touches the ground. If the player subsequently catches the kick, the ball is placed where it was first touched) (A.R. 6-5-1-I-IV).

c. Rules pertaining to a fair catch apply only when a scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone or during free kicks.

d. The purpose of the fair catch provision is to protect the receiver who, by his fair catch signal, agrees he or a teammate will not advance after the catch (A.R. 6-5-5-III).

e. The ball shall be put in play by a snap by the receiving team at the spot of the catch if the ball is caught (Exceptions: Rules 6-5-1-a Exception, 7-1-2 and 8-6-1-b).

No Advance

ARTICLE 2. No Team B player shall carry a caught or recovered ball more than two steps in any direction after a valid or invalid fair catch signal by any Team B player (A.R. 6-5-2-I-IV and A.R. 10-1-5-II).

PENALTY - Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].

Invalid Signals

ARTICLE 3. a. During a down in which a kick is made, no player of Team B shall make any invalid fair catch signal during a free kick or beyond the neutral zone during a scrimmage kick. Any signal is invalid after a scrimmage kick is caught beyond the neutral zone, strikes the ground or touches another player beyond the neutral zone. A signal is invalid after a free kick is caught, strikes the ground or touches another player (A.R. 6-5-3-IV-VI).

b. A catch after an invalid signal is not a fair catch, and the ball is dead where caught. If the signal follows a catch, the ball is dead when the signal is first given (A.R. 6-5-1-II).

c. Invalid signals beyond the neutral zone apply only to Team B (A.R. 6-5-3-II).

d. An invalid signal beyond the neutral zone is possible only when the ball has crossed the neutral zone (Rule 2-15-7) (A.R. 6-5-3-I).

Illegal Block or Contact

ARTICLE 4. A player of Team B who has made a valid or invalid signal for a fair catch and does not touch the ball shall not block or foul an opponent during that down (A.R. 6-5-4-I and II).

PENALTY - Free kick: Receiving team's ball 15 yards from the spot of the foul (Rule 10-2-2-e) [S40]. Scrimmage kick: 15-yard penalty, postscrimmage kick enforcement or basic spot enforcement (Rule 10-2-2-e) [S40].

No Tackling

ARTICLE 5. No player of the kicking team shall tackle or block an opponent who has completed a fair catch. Only the player making a fair catch signal has this protection (A.R. 6-5-5-I and III).

PENALTY - Dead-ball foul. Receiving team's ball 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S38].