

**Coaches Newsletter Vol.5 No. 8**  
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WEEK 8

Just a couple of unusual and/or confusing situations that have been reported to me from Round 8.

**INELIGIBLE NUMBERS ON A PAT**

We have covered the rules regarding eligible and ineligible numbers (and the interpretation used within GV) on a number of occasions in these newsletters, but there was apparently further confusion on the weekend, so let me clarify the rule that appeared to be the subject of confusion.

One team wanted to have an ineligibly-numbered player report as an eligible receiver on a 2-point PAT attempt. They were, correctly, told that an ineligibly-numbered player can NEVER report as an eligible receiver.

However, ineligibly-numbered players can play in any position they like. They just can't be the first to touch a forward pass or go downfield during a play in which a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone before the pass is thrown.

Some of the confusion seemed to stem from the fact that the play in question was a PAT. The rules regarding numbering are exactly the same for PATs as they are for normal plays from scrimmage. If the team is NOT in a scrimmage kick formation, they must have 5 players with ineligible numbers on the line of scrimmage. (In GV, we allow eligibly-numbered players to report as ineligible for the purpose of this rule if necessary as a result of injury).

If the team IS in a scrimmage kick formation (for a punt, a field goal attempt or a 1-point PAT attempt) then the above rule does not apply. They don't have to have 5 ineligibly-numbered players on the LOS. However, the 5 interior linemen are still ineligible by position. All other restrictions on ineligibly-numbered players still apply, wherever they are situated.

**COMPLETION BY A PLAYER ON THE GROUND**

Players must be aware that if a player catches a pass (or takes possession of any live ball) while on the ground then the ball is dead immediately and the player cannot be touched. It may be possible to make legal contact with the player before possession has been gained (e.g. contacting him simultaneously with the arrival of the ball in order to disrupt a reception) but the timing has to be perfect and the contact not excessive. For example, as far as the timing is concerned, if all other requirements for pass interference are met,

then you can't touch the player before the ball gets there and you can't touch him after he has taken possession. That leaves a very narrow window of opportunity.

In addition, the player is in a vulnerable position and must be protected. Excessive force against a player in the ground will probably result in a Personal Foul or worse.

#### EARLY MOVEMENT BY BACKS

I have been asked to once again remind all concerned that backs can move and reset before the snap without being charged with a false start. But do I really need to go over it again?

They don't even have to reset, as long as they are not moving forward at the snap and the team has set for 1 second since the last shift. A shift is a simultaneous movement by 2 or more players.

If we can all remember the rule of thumb that, unless there are very unusual circumstances, a back cannot false start, then we can stop worrying about this situation and get on with the game.