

1 SCRIMMAGE REQUIREMENTS

2 SCRIMMAGE REQUIREMENTS

- Offensive Team Requirements
 - Prior to Snap
 - Snapper; Player Location
 - Encroachment, False Start Restrictions
 - Shift Plays
 - At the Snap
 - Formations
 - Motion
- Defensive Team Requirements
 - Prior to Snap
 - At the Snap

3 SCRIMMAGE REQUIREMENTS

- Teams must have 11 players to start
 - May later play with fewer than 11
 - When on offense, must have 7 players on the line
- Except for a Free Kick
 - Play must start with a legal snap
 - Between hash marks
 - May not be snapped until referee has whistled it ready for play

4 SNAP

- Snap – To hand or pass ball backward from the ground with a quick, continuous motion.
- Snap begins when snapper legally moves ball, other than in adjustment.
- Snap ends when the ball touches the ground or any player.
- If snap touches a lineman, the ball remains dead and it is an illegal snap.
- Does not have to be between snapper's legs.
- Legal snap is such that the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper & touches a backfield player or ground before it touches an A lineman.

5 NEUTRAL ZONE

- Established when referee declares ball ready for play.
- Strip of territory, sideline to sideline, width is length of ball
- Two lines that mark the boundary of Neutral Zone are the scrimmage lines.
- Neutral zone ceases to exist after a change of possession.
- May be expanded to a maximum of two yards beyond defensive line of scrimmage – Applies on scrimmage kicks and forward passes, but not running plays.

6 OFFENSIVE REQUIREMENTS

PRIOR TO SNAP

- SNAPPER
 - After touching ball, may not do anything that looks like a play is about to begin
 - Can't rotate ball end-for-end or move the ball forward
 - Can't fail to keep long axis perpendicular to line of scrimmage
 - Can't take both hands off ball.
 - Following adjustment, lift or move ball other than a legal snap
 - May lift ball for lateral rotation, can roll ball on ground for lace adjustment
 - Can tilt the ball to an angle of 90 degrees (7.1.3 cb)
 - May remove one hand (if placed both hands on it) as long as it is done smoothly and slowly

- After all this, must clearly pause before snap.

7 OFFENSIVE REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO SNAP

- Encroachment – Two phases of restrictions
 - First begins at ready-for-play and primarily restricts defense
 - Second Begins when snapper touches the ball
- Once snapper touches ball
 - Offense not allowed to be in Neutral Zone
 - Except replaced players and incoming substitutes
 - Snapper may be in Neutral Zone, but not beyond it (except his hands)
 - Dead ball foul – 5 yard penalty (Encroachment)
- In Scrimmage Kick formations
 - Lineman may break plane of scrimmage plane by pointing at opponents to confirm blocking assignments (Common Sense)

8 LOCATION OF PLAYERS

- Offensive Players
 - After the ball is ready to play, each player of A who participated in the previous down and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks, before the snap.
 - Rule to prevent “Hide-out” plays
 - Tough to enforce with no huddle offense
 - Foul is illegal formation, 5 yards
- Defensive Players
 - Behind Neutral Zone
 - Inbounds

9 FALSE START RESTRICTIONS

- Rule 7-1-7 “ After ball is ready for play and before the snap begins, no false start shall be made by any A player,”
 - Shift or feigned charge that simulates action at snap Veer/Wishbone action)
 - Shift designed to cause B to encroach. Consider if players move to a new position, the speed and abruptness of movement, down and distance.
 - Any act that is clearly intended to cause B to foul
- If a false start causes B to encroach, only the false start is penalized.

10 FALSE START

- Interior lineman restrictions
 - Lineman between snapper & the end lineman
 - If he has placed his hand(s) on or near the ground may not move his hands or make any quick movement
 - If he is “covered up” and is in a 3 point position, he cannot shift from that until he is no longer covered
 - If he is “covered up” but standing up, he may move to put hands on knees or go to 3 point and even move to a new position as long as it is not abrupt (usually covered tight end).
 - Restriction on interior lineman is by position, not by number
 - If A lineman reacts to B who enters NZ, it is a foul on B
 - Rare, but possible that both A & B move at same instant – If so, offset both fouls

11 FALSE START

- For Balance of Team A
 - Cannot simulate beginning of a play

- Player going into motion may be a tough judgment call (Must judge HOW he went into motion) Question is “Did he miss the snap count and covered it up by motion?” Tough call.
- Quarterbacks may also foul by their actions, particularly if it causes B to foul (Head nods, jerky movements, chuck hands)
- No offensive player may make a quick, jerky movement or any movement that is intended to cause the defense to encroach (Verbal sounds as line becomes set or Dallas Cowboy line set or hard start to motion)

12 SHIFTS

2-37

- Action of ONE or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the snap.
- After a shift, all 11 players of A must come to an absolute stop and remain stationary simultaneously without movement of hands, feet, head or body for at least one second before the snap.
- Can have multiple shifts, but after the last shift all members must comply.
- Can have multiple shifts with no one second pause. Just must have one second pause after the LAST shift.

13 SHIFTS

- After One second pause, we can have a snap or one player may legally go into motion (if didn’t pause, technically it is not motion, but part of shift).
- QB may move one foot up or down while otherwise stationary to signal motion.
- If QB lowers his body into position behind snapper, or move either foot forward, or make any other forward movement, he has shifted and must pause one second before the snap.
- Common error – lineman is going set and back starts motion

14 RESTRICTIONS AT THE SNAP

- Formations
 - Refer to players position “on the line” or “in the backfield”
 - Two imaginary lines, both parallel to the line and both perpendicular to the ground
 - One runs through waist of the snapper
 - Other runs through waist of a lineman
 - Back – Has no part of his body breaking the plane of an imaginary line through the waist of the nearest legal lineman (except player under snapper)
 - Lineman
 - Facing opponent’s goal, with line of shoulders approx parallel (within 30 degrees of the line)
 - Head or Foot breaking imaginary plane through waist of snapper

15 FORMATIONS

- Team A must have at least 7 players on line; can have more
- Of the 7, at least 5 must be numbered 50-79 (unless team is in a scrimmage kick formation)
- If not on the line, must be in the backfield, can’t be a Mug-Rump
- Two lineman on either side of snapper may interlock legs with snapper.
- Other lineman must have each foot outside the foot of the player next to him.
- Players may stand, crouch or kneel.

16 FORMATIONS

- Scrimmage Kick Formation Exception
 - Formation: Team A has at least one player 7 yards or more behind NZ in position to receive a long snap with no person in position to receive a hand-to hand snap.
 - In SK formation, Team A is allowed to have any number of lineman whose numbers are outside 50-79 range
- To gain exemption, player must assume an initial position on his line between the ends.

- He is now an interior lineman and is an ineligible receiver
- If a subsequent shift leaves him in position of an eligible receiver, he remains ineligible. Officials must know.

17 FORMATIONS

- Illegal Formations:
 - Less than 7 on the line
 - Fewer than 5 on line numbered 50-79, except when in a scrimmage kick formation
 - Any player other than QB neither on the line nor in the backfield
 - Lineman other than guards and snapper interlocking legs
 - Non-compliance with regard to 9-yd marks
- Not a foul until ball is snapped. Means Team A may legally shift to correct situation and make Formation legal prior to snap.

18 MOTION

- Offense may have one man in motion at the snap.
- This player must be moving parallel to or towards his own goal line at the moment the ball is snapped. (Can't have 2 in motion)
- If starts from a position not clearly behind the line (on line or a mug-rump), must either
 - Establish himself as a back by stopping for at least one full second while in the backfield, or
 - Must be at least 5 yards behind his line of scrimmage at the snap.
- Man in motion must be in the backfield at the snap
- Live ball foul; 5 yards from previous spot.

19 DEFENSIVE TEAM REQUIREMENTS

- After the ready, can't touch the ball, an opponent or enter the neutral zone to give defensive signals.
- Can be in or beyond NZ until snapper touches ball. After that no one may encroach. (Exception: replaced players and substitutes)
- Not permitted to call defensive signals that simulate sound or cadence of A's snap count or otherwise interfere. "Disconcerting Acts."
- If QB uses audible, can't interfere with that.
- Can use verbal signals, but must be different.
- Team A has 1st choice; so Defense must change if same.
- Dead ball foul – 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct

20 DEFENSIVE TEAM

- Can be moving at the snap.
- Must be inbounds at the snap.
- Must be behind their side of the neutral zone at the snap.
- Defensive player is on his line of scrimmage when he is within one yard of his scrimmage line at the snap.

21 MECHANICS AT THE SNAP

- Referee
 - One second delay met for shift in backfield
 - Snap irregularities and movement of lineman
 - Alert for illegal shift or player in motion.

- Number of A players and eligible backs
- Umpire
 - Number of A players
 - Five A players on line numbered 50 to 79 and ineligible receivers
 - Interference with snap, false start or encroachment
 - Snap irregularities and movement of lineman
 - Disconcerting signals by B
 - B's players on line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone

22 MECHANICS

AT THE SNAP

- Head Linesman and Line Judge
 - Players meet the 9-yard mark requirement
 - Identify if closest A player is on or off LOS
 - Count B and know eligible receivers on respective side. Be alert for illegal substitutions.
 - Check player in motion away from you, stay with him even if he reverses motion
 - Check wingbacks, flankers split ends and slot backs for positioning
 - Know that have a minimum of 7 A players on LOS
 - Encroachment or false start
- Back Judge
 - 25 second clock operation
 - Provide visible count of last 5 seconds if no 25 second game clock in use
 - Count B players