

# RULE 10. Penalty Enforcement

## SECTION 1. Penalties Completed

### How and When Completed

#### ARTICLE 1.

- a. A penalty is completed when it is accepted, declined or canceled according to rule or when the choice is obvious to the referee.
- b. Any penalty may be declined, but a disqualified player must leave the game.
- c. When a foul is committed, the penalty shall be completed before the ball is declared ready for play for any ensuing down.
- d. Penalties as stated are not enforced if in conflict with other rules (A.R. 9-4-1-XI and A.R. 10-1-1-I).

### Simultaneous With Snap

ARTICLE 2. A foul that occurs simultaneously with a snap or free kick is considered as occurring during that down (*Exception:* Rule 3-5-2-e).

### Live-Ball Fouls by the Same Team

ARTICLE 3. When two or more live-ball fouls by the same team are reported to the referee, the referee shall explain the alternative penalties to the field captain of the offended team, who then may elect only one of these penalties [*Exception:* When a foul(s) for unsportsmanlike conduct (noncontact fouls) occurs, the penalty(ies) is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for any other foul] (A.R. 10-1-3-I).

### Offsetting Fouls

ARTICLE 4. If live-ball fouls by both teams are reported to the referee, each such foul is an offsetting foul, the penalties cancel each other, and the down is replayed (A.R. 10-1-4-II, IX and X).

#### *Exceptions:*

1. When there is a change of team possession during a down or at the end of a down by rule, the team last gaining possession may decline offsetting fouls and thereby retain possession after completion of the penalty for its infraction if it had not fouled before last gaining possession (A.R. 10-1-4-I-VIII).
2. When Team B's foul calls for postscrimmage kick enforcement, Team B may decline offsetting fouls and accept postscrimmage kick enforcement.
3. When a live-ball foul is administered as a dead-ball foul, it does not offset and is enforced in order of occurrence.
4. Rule 8-3-4-c (during a try after Team B possession).

### Dead-Ball Fouls

ARTICLE 5. Penalties for dead-ball fouls are administered separately and in order of occurrence (A.R. 10-1-5-I-VIII) [*Exception:* When unsportsmanlike or dead-ball personal fouls by both teams are reported to the referee and before any of the penalties have been completed or the order of occurrence cannot be determined, the fouls offset, the number or type of down established before the fouls occurred is unaffected, and the penalties are cancelled, except that any disqualified player must leave the game (Rules 5-2-6 and 10-2-2-a)].

### Live-Ball—Dead-Ball Fouls

ARTICLE 6. When a live-ball foul by one team is followed by one or more dead-ball fouls (including live-ball fouls penalized as dead-ball fouls) by an opponent or by the same team, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence (A.R. 10-1-6-I-VII).

### Interval Fouls

ARTICLE 7. Fouls that occur between the end of the fourth period and the start of the extra period for overtime are enforced from the 25-yard line, the spot of the first series (*Exception:* Rule 10-2-2-g) (A.R. 10-1-7-I and IV-XVIII).

## SECTION 2. Enforcement Procedures

### Spots

ARTICLE 1. The enforcement spots are: the previous spot, the spot of the foul, the succeeding spot and the spot where the run or scrimmage kick ends.

### Procedures

ARTICLE 2. The following procedures apply:

- a. Dead ball—The enforcement spot for a foul committed when the ball is dead is the succeeding spot (A.R. 10-2-2-XI, XV, XVII and XXVI).
- b. Snap or free kick—The enforcement spot for fouls occurring simultaneously with a snap or free kick is the previous spot (A.R. 10-2-2-I).
- c. Running plays—The basic enforcement spots for fouls that occur during running plays in the field of play or end zone are as follows (A.R. 10-2-2-V-VII and XXXIV):
  1. When the run ends beyond the neutral zone, the basic enforcement spot is the end of the related run (**Exceptions:** Offensive team face-mask, illegal use of hands, holding, illegal block and personal fouls, behind the neutral zone, are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) (Rules 2-25-10-a and 2-30-4) (A.R. 10-2-2-XVI, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXI and XXXII).
  2. When the run ends behind the neutral zone before a change of team possession, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot (**Exceptions:** Offensive team facemask, illegal use of hands, holding, illegal block and personal fouls, behind the neutral zone, are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) (Rules 2-25-10-b and 2-30-4) (A.R. 10-2-2-XXVII).
  3. When there is no neutral zone, the basic enforcement spot is the end of the related run (**Exception:** Rule 8-5-1 Exceptions) (Rules 2-25-10-c and 2-30-2, 3 and 4) (A.R. 10-2-2-X, XII and XXXVI).
- d. Pass plays—The basic enforcement spot for fouls during a legal forward pass play is the previous spot (Rules 2-25-10-d and 2-30-1).

#### **Exceptions:**

1. Team B pass interference spot fouls.
2. Roughing-the-passer enforcement on a completed forward pass from the end of the last run when that run ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down (A.R. 10-2-2-XXXIII and XXXV).
3. Illegal touching.
4. Enforce facemask, illegal use of hands, holding, illegal block and personal fouls, occurring behind the neutral zone by the offensive team from the previous spot (**Exception:** Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line).
- e. Kick plays—The basic enforcement spot for fouls that occur during a legal free or scrimmage kick play before possession is gained or regained or the ball is declared dead by rule is the previous spot (Rules 2-25-10-e and 2-30-2 and 3) (A.R. 6-1-2-V and VI, 8-7-2-VII and A.R. 10-2-2-II, III, VIII, XIII, XIV and XIX-XXI).

#### **Exceptions:**

1. Interference with the opportunity to make a catch—spot foul (Rule 6-4-1).
2. A block or foul after a valid or invalid signal for a fair catch by a Team B player who signaled for a fair catch during a free kick and had not touched the ball—spot foul (Rule 6-5-4).
3. **Postscrimmage kick enforcement:** The enforcement spot is the spot where the kick ends when Team B fouls occur (Rule 2-25-11):
  - a) During scrimmage kick plays other than a try, and during extra periods.
  - b) During a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the neutral zone.
  - c) Three yards or more beyond the neutral zone.
  - d) Before the end of the kick (A.R. 10-2-2-IX, XXII and XXV).
  - e) When Team A does not have possession of the ball when the down ends.  
Team B fouls behind the postscrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.
4. Offensive team facemask, illegal use of hands, holding, illegal block and personal fouls, occurring behind the neutral zone, are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.

5. Encroachment by Team A on a free kick may be enforced from the previous spot or from the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B after Team B's run (Rule 6-1-2-a).
- f. Behind the goal line:
1. The enforcement spot is the goal line for fouls by the opponents of the team in possession after a change of team possession (not on a try) in the field of play when the run ends behind the goal line (**Exception:** Rule 8-5-1 Exceptions).
  2. The basic enforcement spot is the 20-yard line for fouls that occur after a change of team possession (not on a try) in the end zone and the ball remains in the end zone where it is declared dead (A.R. 10-2-2-XXXVIII-XL).
  3. The enforcement spot is the goal line for fouls by the opponents of the team in possession after a change of team possession in the end zone (not on a try) when the run ends behind the goal line and any subsequent loose ball is recovered in the field of play (A.R. 10-2-2-XLI).
- g. Fouls during or after a touchdown, field goal or try:
1. Personal-foul penalties for fouls by opponents of the scoring team during a down that ends in a touchdown are penalized on the try or the succeeding kickoff. The captain of the offended team has the choice (A.R. 10-2-2-XLIII).
  2. Defensive pass interference fouls on a try from the three-yard line are penalized one-half the distance to the goal line or, if the try is successful, the penalty is declined.
  3. When a foul(s) occurs after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play on the try or there was a live-ball foul penalized as a dead-ball foul on the touchdown play, enforcement is on the try or the succeeding kickoff. The captain of the offended team has the choice (A.R. 3-2-3-VI).
  4. Live-ball fouls during field goal plays will be penalized by rule. To accept points on a successful field goal, Team A must decline Team B live-ball fouls. A successful field goal may be canceled and the penalty(ies) enforced by rule (**Exception:** Rule 10-2-2-e Exception 3). Live-ball fouls penalized as dead-ball fouls and dead-ball fouls after a field goal down will be enforced at the succeeding spot.
  5. Fouls during and after a try down are penalized under Rules 8-3-3, 8-3-4 and 8-3-5 (A.R. 3-2-3-VII-VIII).
- h. Distance penalties for fouls by the receiving team may not extend the receiving team's restraining line behind its five-yard line. Penalties that place the restraining line of the receiving team behind its five-yard line are enforced from the next succeeding spot.

#### **Half-Distance Enforcement Procedures**

ARTICLE 3. No distance penalty, including tries from on or inside the three-yard line, shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line [**Exceptions:**(1) Scrimmage downs, other than tries, under Rule 7-3-8 Penalty for Team B interference; and (2) on tries, defensive pass interference when the ball is snapped from outside the three-yard line].