

2023 NFHS FOOTBALL RULE CHANGES

1-5-3 ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT (2022 RULE)

RULE 1 SECTION 5 PLAYER EQUIPMENT

ART. 3 . . . Illegal equipment. No player shall participate while wearing illegal equipment. This applies to any equipment, which in the opinion of the umpire is dangerous, confusing or inappropriate. Illegal equipment shall always include but is not limited to:

a. The following items related to the Game Uniform: ...

5 Uniform adornments, with the exception of:

- a) One moisture absorbing solid-colored towel that is not ball -or penalty flag colored, is no less than 4 inches in width and 12 inches in length; no greater than 18 inches in width and 36 inches in length; has no more than one visible manufacturer's logo/trademark that does not exceed 2 1/4 square inches in any dimension; **and if worn by any player; must be the same solid color for all players and wearing a towel.****

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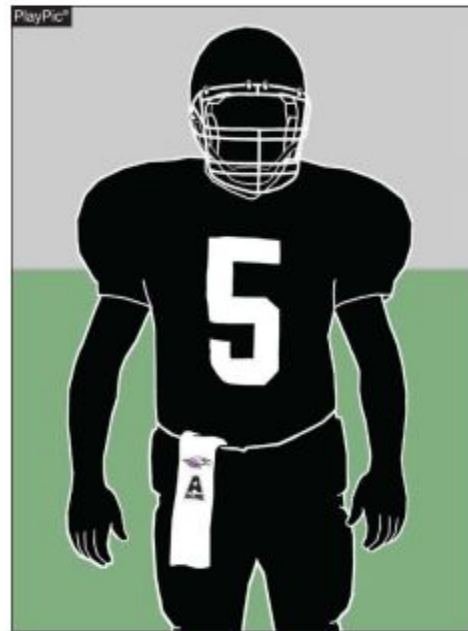
5 Uniform adornments, with the exception of:

- a) One moisture-absorbing solid-color towel that:
 - 1) Is not ball- or penalty flag colored;
 - 2) Is no less than 4 inches in width and 12 inches in length;
 - 3) Is no greater than 18 inches in width and 36 inches in length;
 - 4) Has no more than one visible manufacturer's logo/trademark reference that does not exceed 2¼ square inches and does not exceed 2¼ inches in any dimension; and
 - 5) **Has no more than one school logo/trademark reference that does not exceed 2¼ square inches and does not exceed 2¼ inches in any dimension.**

RULE 1-5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW) UNIFORM ADORNMENTS - TOWELS

It is legal for a player to have one moisture-absorbing solid-colored towel that has no more than one visible manufacturer's logo/trademark reference that does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches and does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in any dimension; and has no more than one school logo/trademark reference that does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches and does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in any dimension.

Towels do not have to be the same solid color for each player.



2-29-1 OUT OF BOUNDS (2022 RULE)

ART. 1 . . . A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official that is on or outside the sideline or end line.

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ART. 1 . . . A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official that is on or outside the sideline or end line, **and that player remains out of bounds until returning to the field with any body part touching the field and no body part touching out of bounds.**

RULE 2-29-1 PLAYER OUT OF BOUNDS



A2 is out of bounds as he has not had any body part touch inbounds. Therefore, when A2 intentionally touches the ball after being out of bounds, he has caused the ball to become dead. The pass is incomplete and A2 is guilty of illegal participation.

2-32-16 PLAYER DESIGNATION (2022 RULE)

RULE 2 – SECTION 32 PLAYER DESIGNATIONS

ART. 16 . . . A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury. A player who initiates contact against a defenseless player is responsible for making legal contact. When in question, a player is defenseless. Examples of defenseless players include, but are not limited to:

- a. A passer;
- b. A receiver attempting to catch a pass who has not had time to clearly become a runner;
- c. The intended receiver of a pass in the action during and immediately following an interception or potential interception;
- d. A runner already in the grasp of a tackler and whose forward progress has been stopped;
- e. A kickoff or punt returner attempting to catch or recover a kick, or one who has completed a catch or recovery and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a runner;
- f. A player on the ground including a runner who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet-first;
- g. A player obviously out of the play or not in the immediate vicinity of the runner; and
- h. A player who receives a blindside block with forceful contact not initiated with open hands

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- a. A passer;
- b. A receiver attempting to catch a pass who has not had time to clearly become a runner;
- c. The intended receiver of a pass in the action during and immediately following an interception or potential interception;
- d. A receiver in (b) and (c) above, including the person intercepting the pass, who is forcefully contacted by an opponent and that contact is not:
 - 1. Incidental contact as a result of making a play on the ball;
 - 2. Initiated with open hands; or
 - 3. An attempt to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver
- e.. A runner already in the grasp.....

RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS

The receiver is not defenseless because the opponent is attempting to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver.





RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS

The receiver is not defenseless even if the contact by the opponent is forceful because the contact is initiated with open hands. The contact could be pass interference, however.





RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS

The receiver is not defenseless because of the incidental contact as a result of the defender making a play on the ball.



7-5-2 FORWARD PASS CLASSIFICATION (2022 RULE)

RULE 7 – SECTION 5 FORWARD-PASS CLASSIFICATION

ART. 2 . . . An illegal forward pass is a foul. Illegal forward passes include:

- a. A pass after team possession has changed during the down.
- b. A pass from beyond the neutral zone.
- c. A second and subsequent forward pass(es) thrown during a down.
- d. A pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver, or thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or to conserve time.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.
2. It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass if;
 - a. The passer has been beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap; and
 - b. The pass reaches the neutral zone, including the extension beyond the sideline.

7-5-2 FORWARD PASS CLASSIFICATION (2022 RULE)

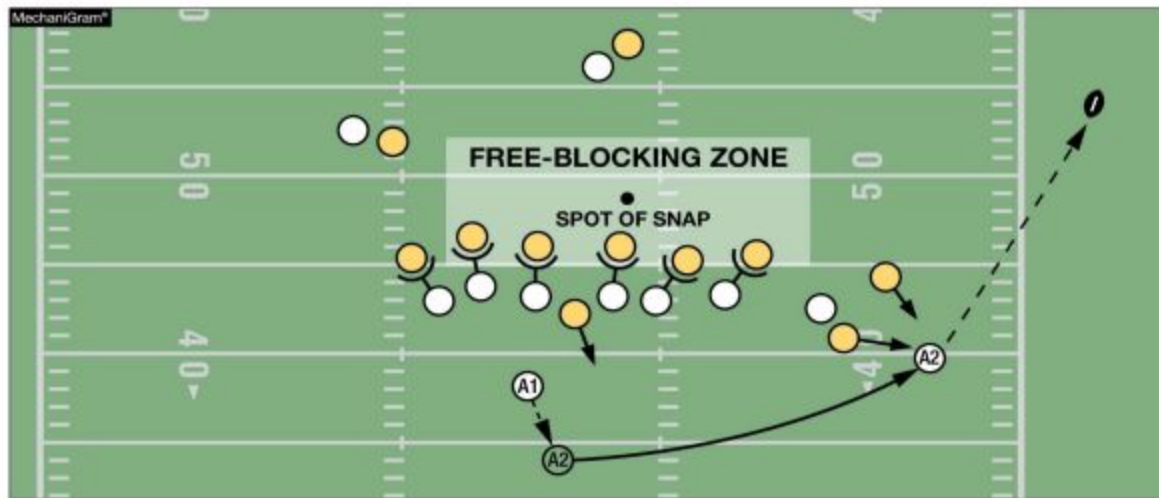
EXCEPTIONS:

1. It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.
2. It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass **if all of the following conditions are met:**
 - a. The passer **has possessed the ball** beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap;
 - b. The pass reaches the neutral zone, including the extension beyond the sideline; and
 - c. **The passer is the only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.**

RULE 7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5-2 d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW),

TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW)

INTENTIONAL GROUNDING EXCEPTION



This is a foul for intentional grounding since A2 is the second player to possess the ball. Only the player who possessed the ball after the snap ends may take advantage of the intentional grounding exception.

TABLE 7-5 – SUMMARY OF FOULS THAT CAN OCCUR DURING FORWARD PASS PLAYS AND THEIR PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT SPOTS (RULE 2022)

2. Forward Pass Interference (7-5-10) Restrictions apply only to a legal pass, untouched by B in or behind the neutral zone which crosses the neutral zone and interference may occur only beyond the neutral zone.
- a. A hinders B. (Restriction begins with the snap.)
 - b. B hinders A. (Restriction begins when the pass is thrown.)
 - c. Intentional pass interference (an additional 15 yards)

TABLE 7-5 – SUMMARY OF FOULS THAT CAN OCCUR DURING FORWARD PASS PLAYS AND THEIR PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT SPOTS (RULE 2023)

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b. B hinders A. (Restriction begins when the pass is thrown.)

TABLE 7-5 2c (DELETED), 7-5 PENALTY INTENTIONAL PASS INTERFERENCE



The additional penalty for intentional pass interference as illustrated in PlayPic A has been deleted. The Team B player in the gray jersey will be penalized 15 yards for the pass interference foul committed in PlayPic B.

2023 DELETE RULE 10-6

10-6 Enforcement Spots, All-But-One Principle

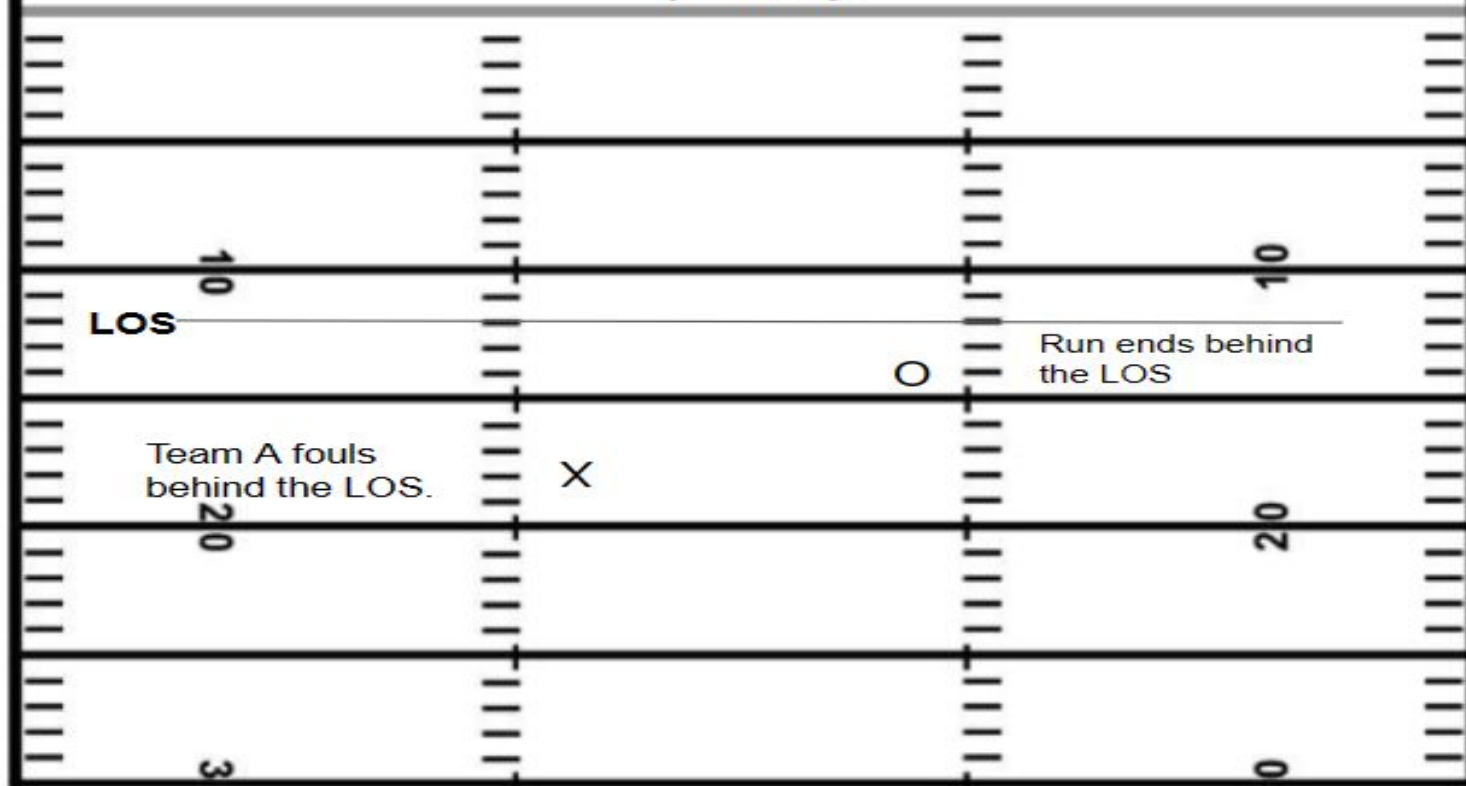
Unless otherwise listed in Section 4 and 5, a penalty for a foul occurring during a play is enforced from the basic spot with the exception of a foul by the offense which occurs behind the basic spot during a loose ball play or running play. This particular foul is enforced from the spot of the foul.

RATIONALE FOR CHANGE

This change restructures and clarifies the amendments to Rule 10 to eliminate the excessive penalty enforcements for offensive fouls that occur behind the line of scrimmage. This revision stipulates the basic spot for enforcement of fouls behind the line of scrimmage is the previous spot rather than the spot of the foul unless otherwise specified by rule.

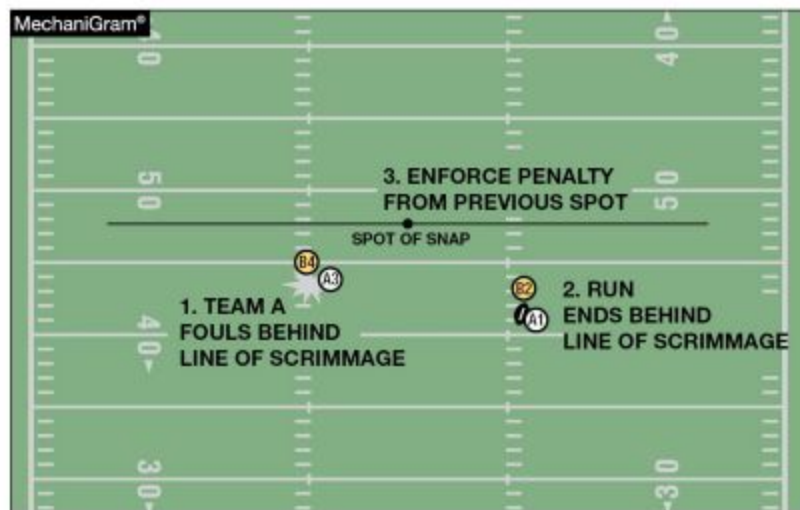
Rule of Thumb: If the run ends behind the line of scrimmage and/or the penalty occurs behind the line of scrimmage, the basic spot for penalty enforcement is the previous spot.

In 2022 this would effectively be a 16 yard penalty.



RULE 10-4-2d

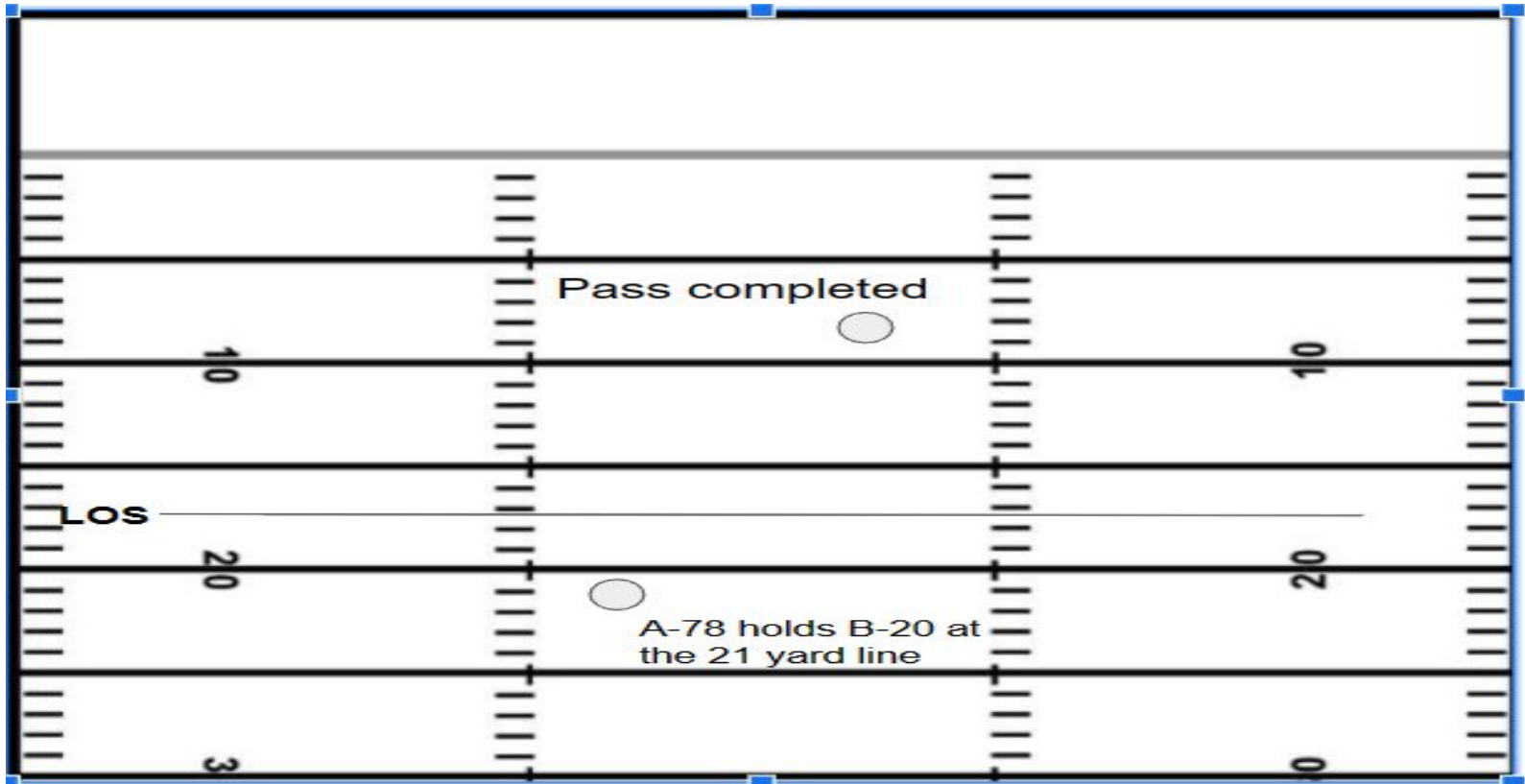
BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by A when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.

2nd and ten at B-17. A-78 is flagged for holding at B-21. Pass is completed to A89 who is downed at the B-8.

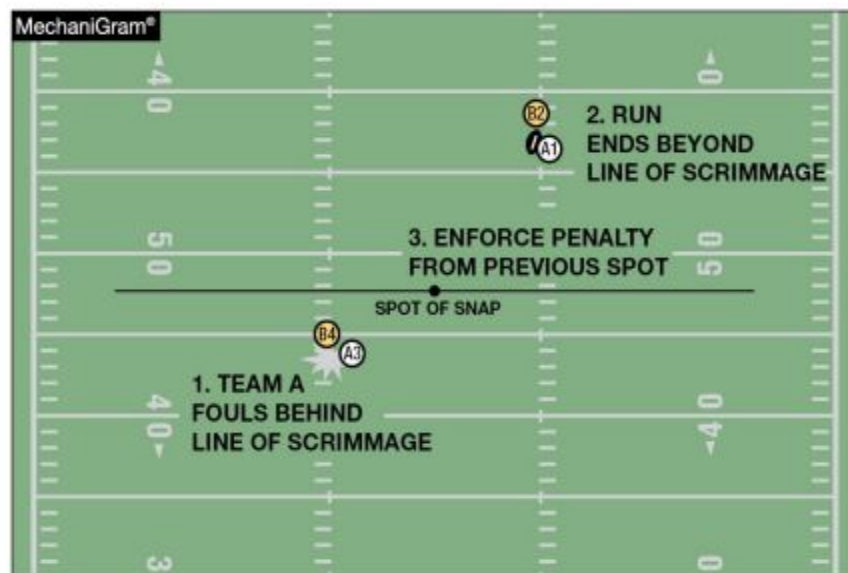
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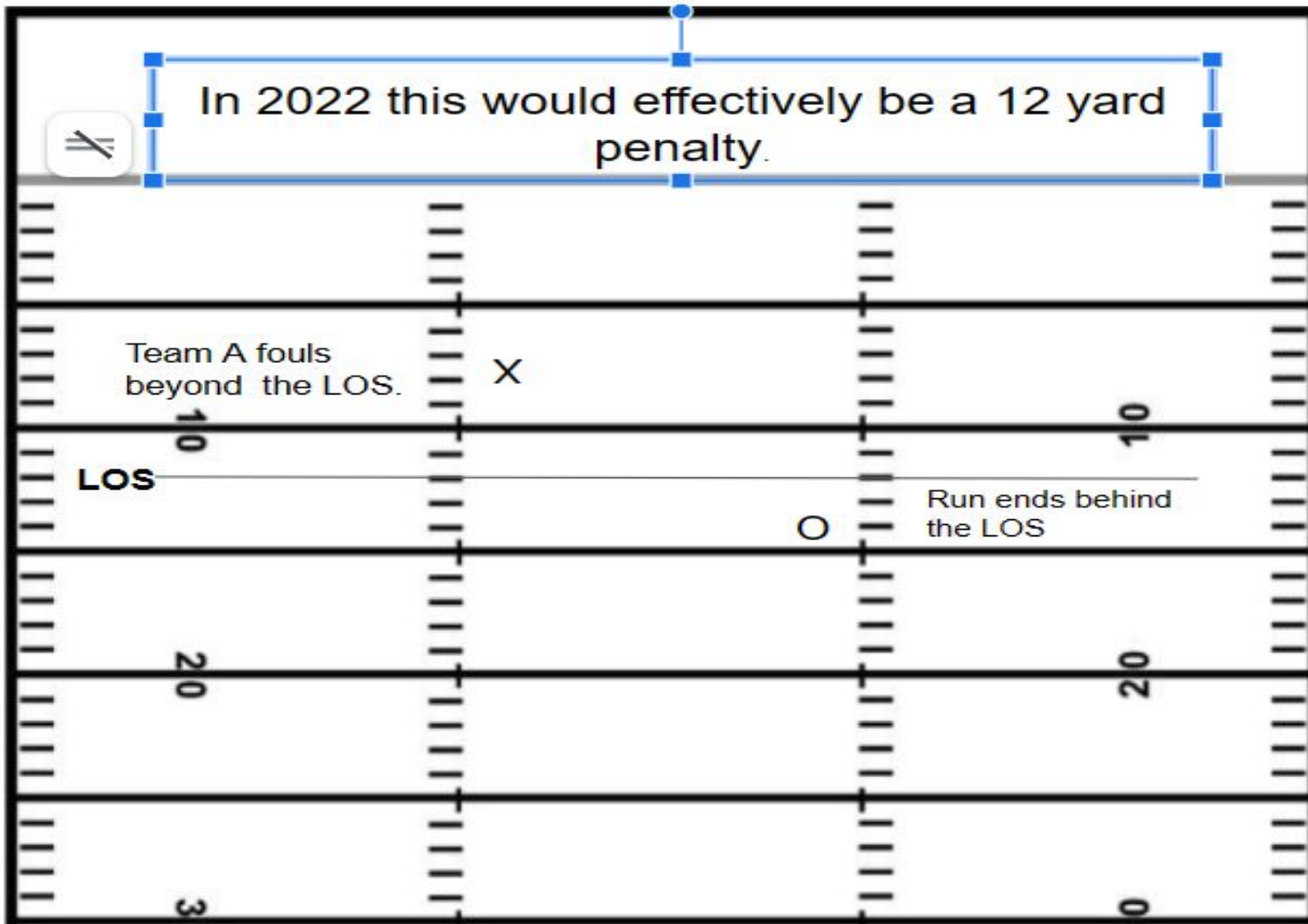


RULE 10-4-2e

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



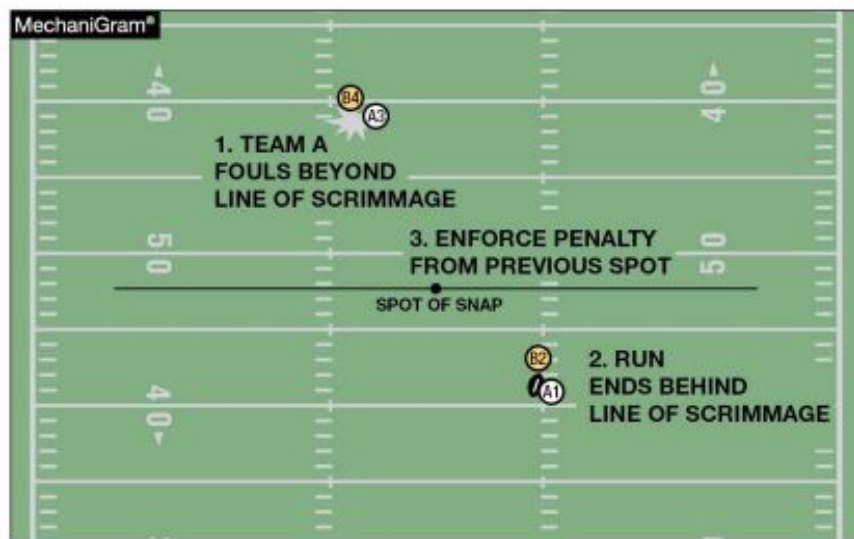
The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by A that occurs behind the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage.





RULE 10-4-2f

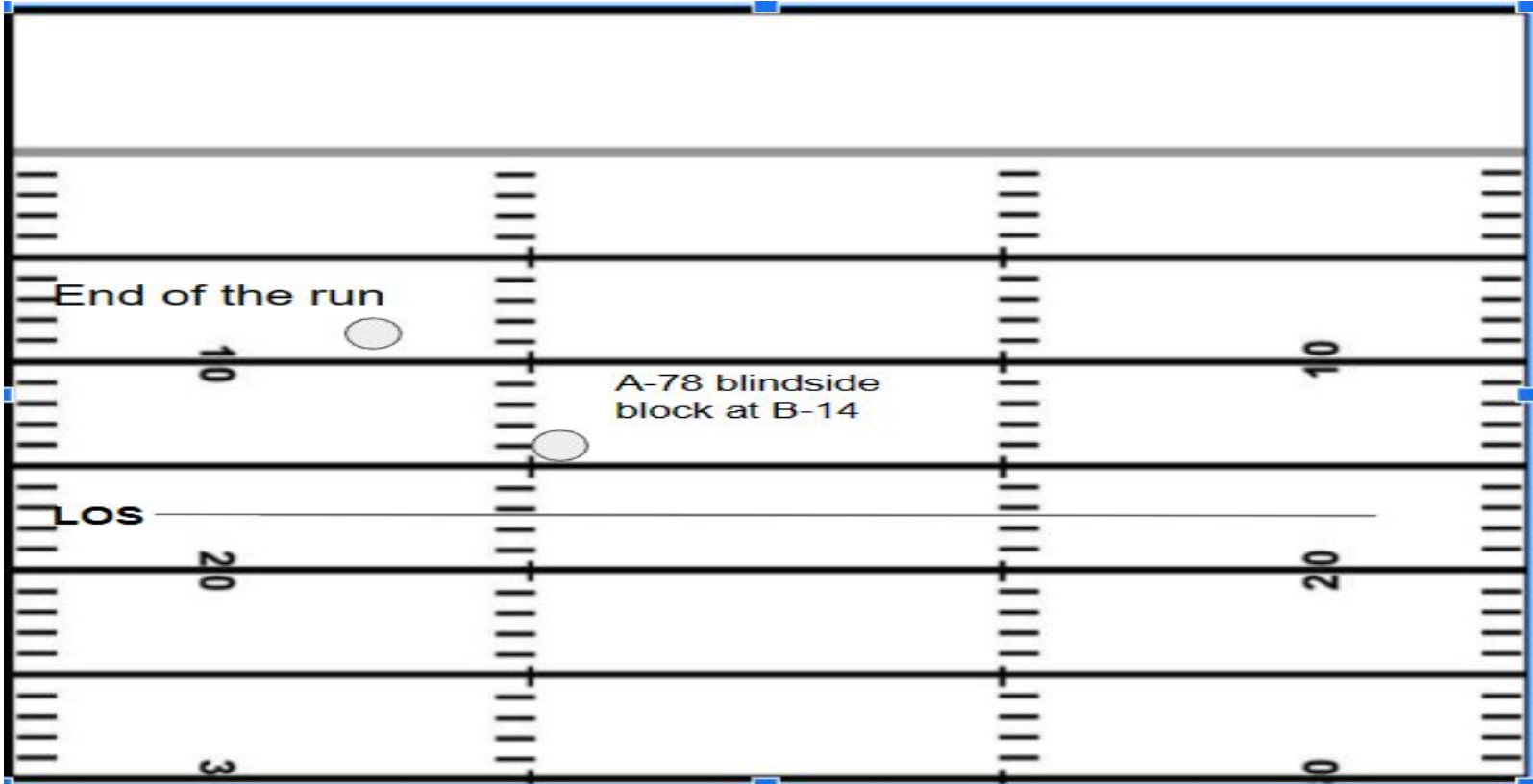
BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage.

3rd and 5 at the B-17. A20 runs off tackle to the B9 where he is tackled. During the run A78 blindside blocks B50 at the B14.

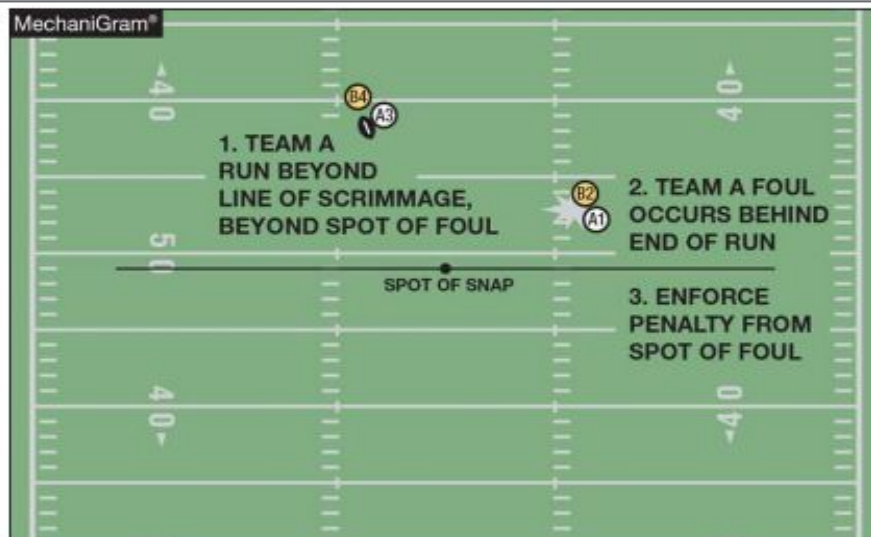
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RULE 10-4-4d

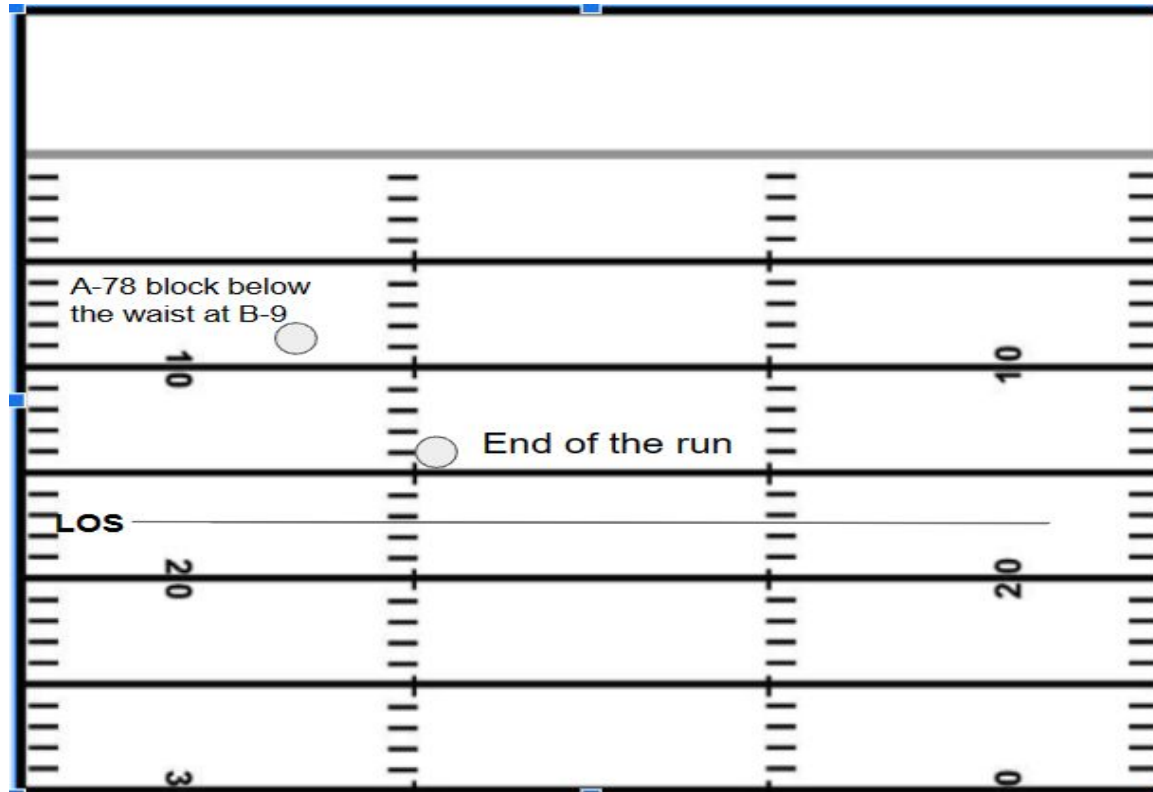
BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



The basic spot is the spot of the foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs behind the end of the run or related run.

2nd and 4 at the B17 yard line. A20 runs the ball up the middle to the B14 yard line. During the run A81 low blocks B21 at the B9 yard line.

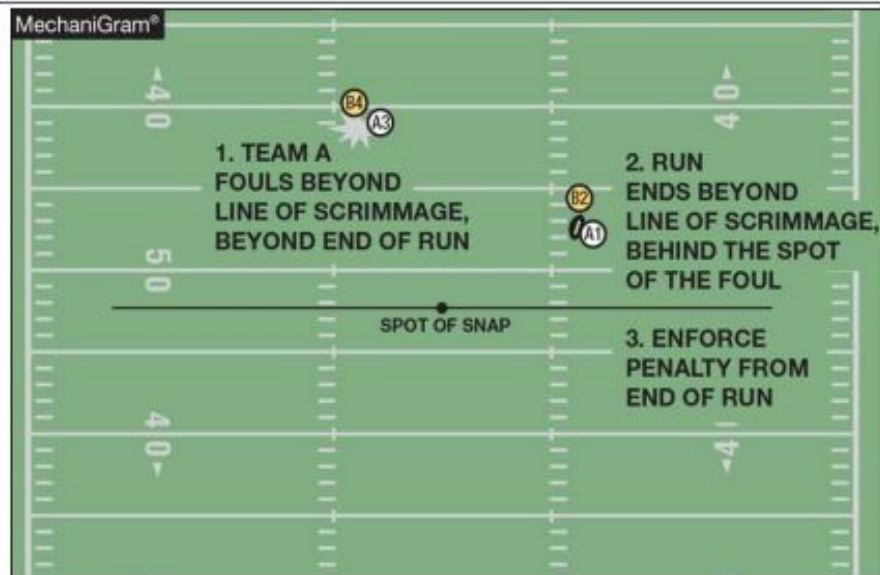
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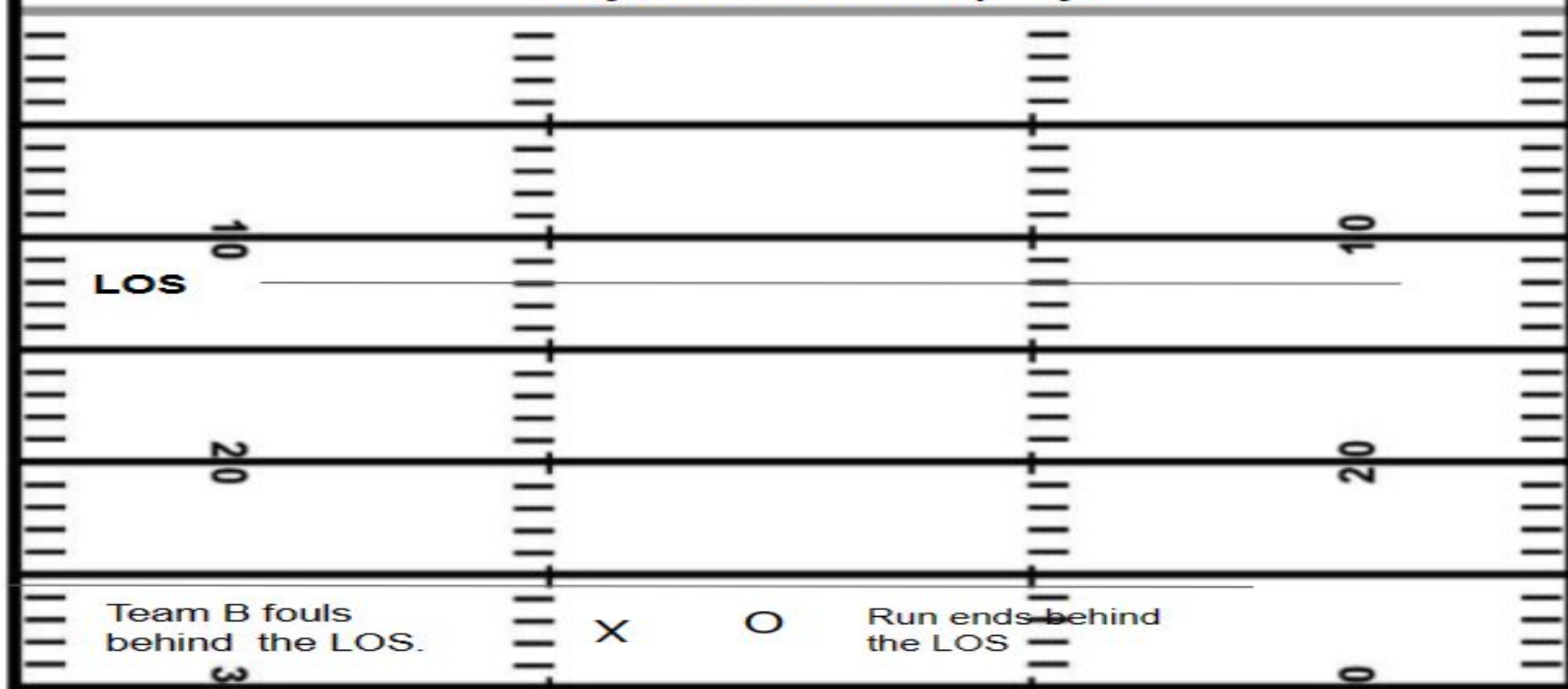
RULE 10-4-5e

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



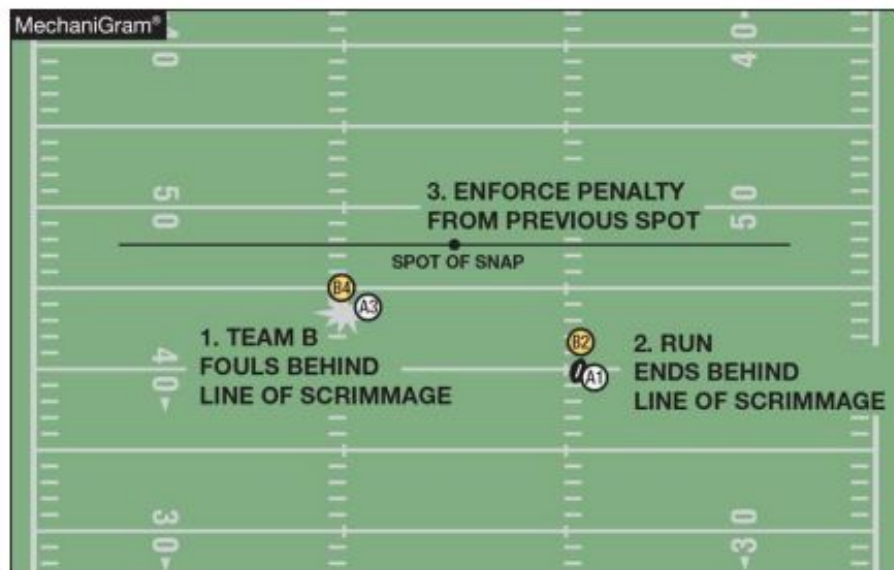
The basic spot is the spot of the foul for a foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs in advance of the end of the run or related run.

In 2022 the Offense would effectively lose 10 yards on this play..



RULE 10-4-2d

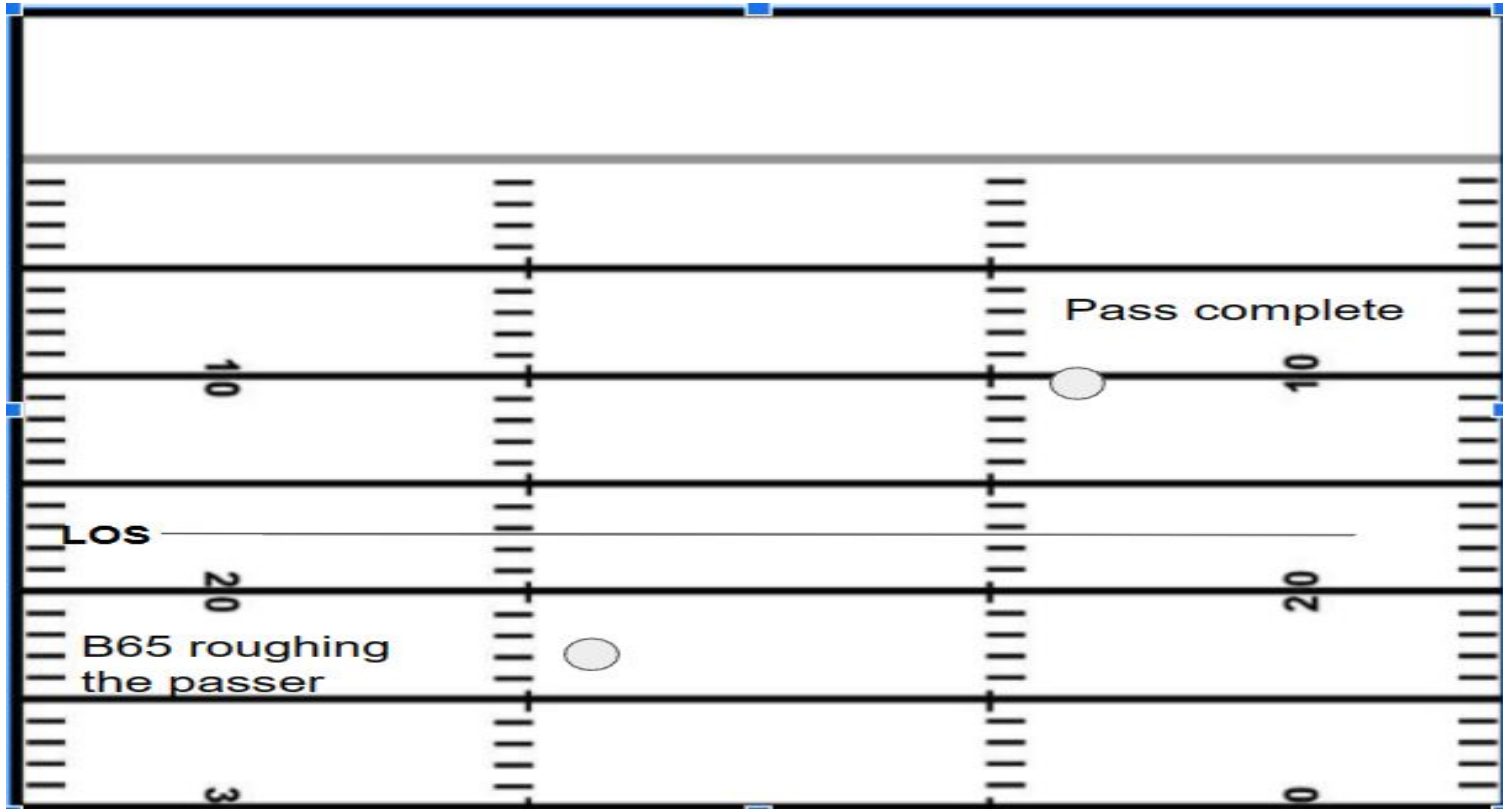
BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.

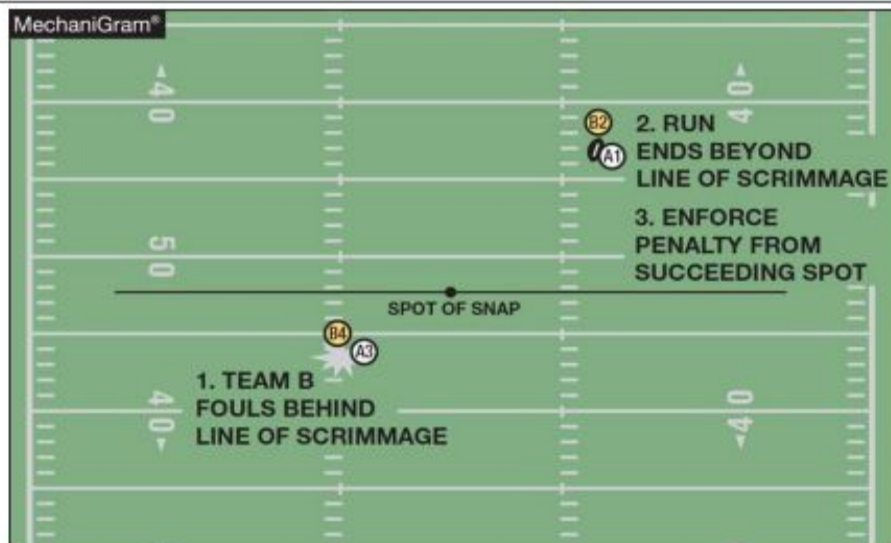
1st and 10 from the B17 yard line. The pass is completed to A84 at the B10 yard line. B65 is flagged for roughing the passer at the B23 yard line

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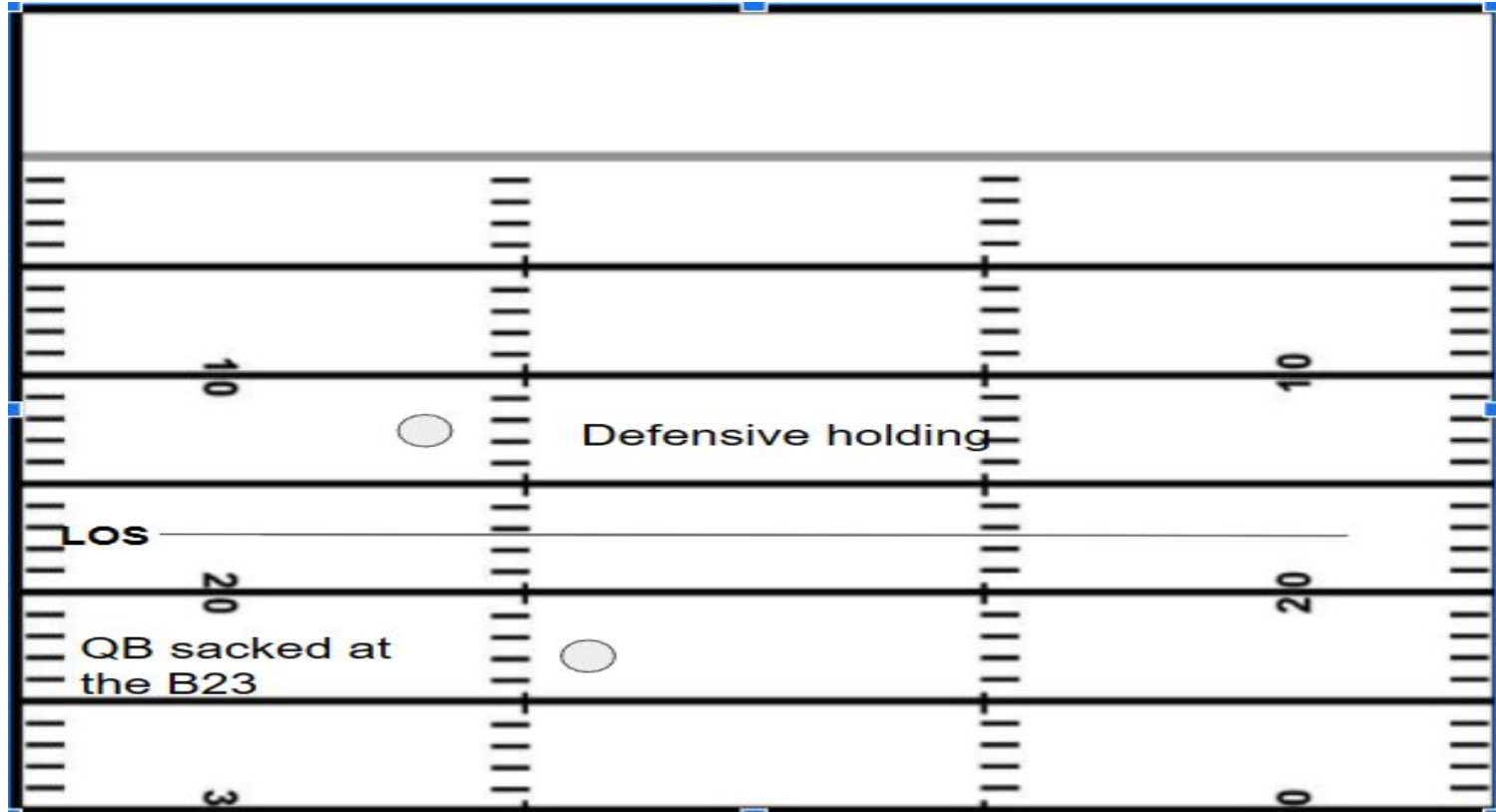
RULE 10-4-5f BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



The basic spot is the succeeding spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage.

3rd and 8 from the B17: The Quarterback is sacked at the B23 yard line. During the play B32 is flagged for holding eligible receiver A87 at the B12 yard line.

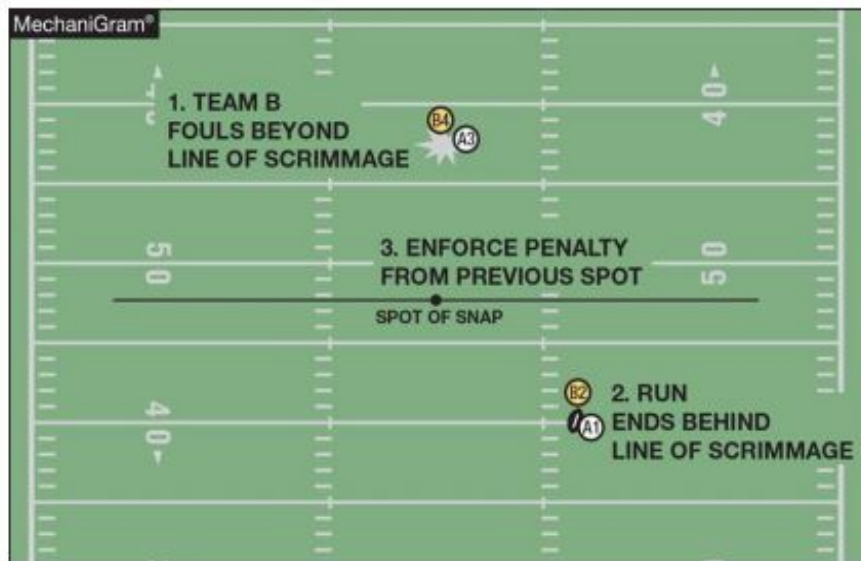
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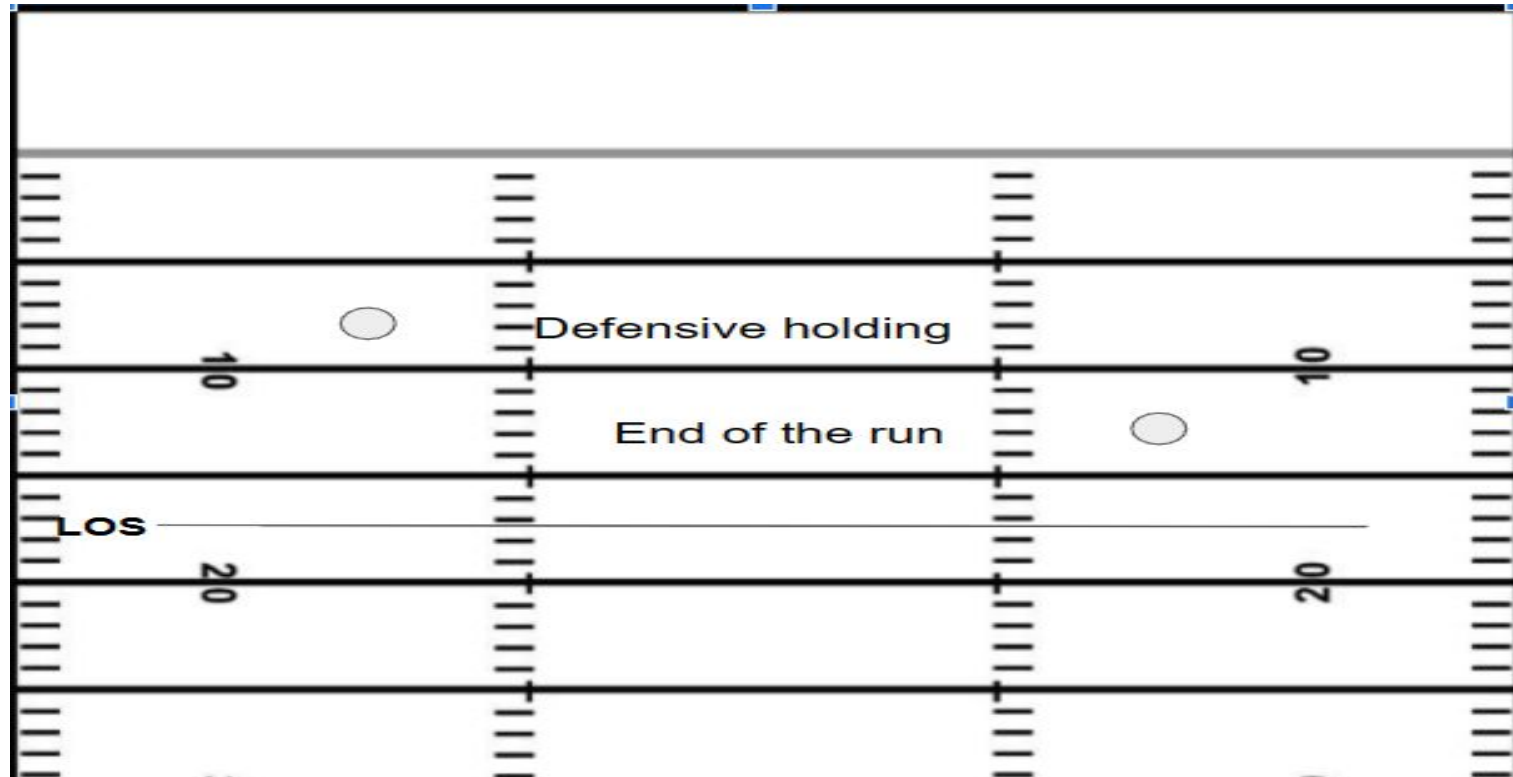
RULE 10-4-2d

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.

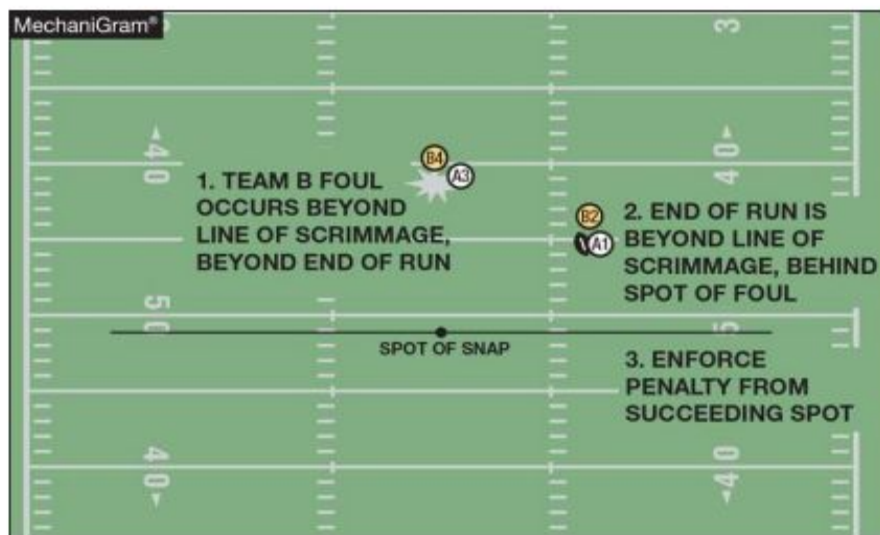
3rd and 5 from the B17 yard line. Quarterback is under a heavy rush, he scrambles and is downed at the B13. During the play B32 is flagged for holding eligible receiver A87 at the B12 yard line.





RULE 10-4-5f

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



The basic spot is the succeeding spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs beyond the end of the run.

RULE 10-4, TABLE 10-4 (NEW), 10-6 (DELETED) BASIC SPOT

SUMMARY OF MANY FOULS THAT CAN OCCUR DURING RUNNING PLAYS AND THEIR PENALTIES AND BASIC SPOTS UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED BY RULE

FOUL BY	SPOT OF FOUL	END OF PLAY	BASIC SPOT	REFERENCE
A	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
A	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2e
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2f
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Foul Behind End of Run or Related Run – Spot of Foul	10-4-4d
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Foul Advance of End of Run or Related Run – Succeeding Spot	10-4-5e
B	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
B	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Succeeding Spot	10-4-5f
B	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
B	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Succeeding Spot	10-4-5f



NOTE: The basic spot is the spot of the foul when A commits any foul in his end zone for which the penalty is accepted (8-5-2c).

EXCEPTIONS: Fouls occurring behind the line of scrimmage that involve “the ball”

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- 1) Intentional Grounding: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.

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- 1) Intentional Grounding: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- 2) Illegal forward pass: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.

EXCEPTIONS: Fouls occurring behind the line of scrimmage that involve “the ball”

- 1) Intentional Grounding: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- 2) Illegal forward pass: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- 3) Illegal kicking: 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

EXCEPTIONS: Fouls occurring behind the line of scrimmage that involve “the ball”

- 1) Intentional Grounding: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- 2) Illegal forward pass: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- 3) Illegal kicking: 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.
- 4) Illegal batting: 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

EXCEPTIONS: Fouls occurring behind the line of scrimmage that involve “the ball”

- 1) Intentional Grounding: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- 2) Illegal forward pass: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- 3) Illegal kicking: 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.
- 4) Illegal batting: 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.
- 5) Illegal participation: 15 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

EXCEPTION: Provisions for offensive fouls occurring in the end zone that may result in a safety remain intact

8-5-2c: It is a safety when a player on offense commits any foul in the end zone and the penalty is accepted.

FYI: PASS INTERFERENCE

The pass interference rule in Maine remains as is written in the 2023 Rule Book.

7-5-10: It is forward-pass interference if any player A or B who is beyond the neutral zone interferes with and eligible opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch or bat the pass. **15 yard penalty.**

PILOT RULE CHANGE IN MAINE

If the ball, in player possession, becomes dead out of bounds. The game clock will be restarted when the ball is marked ready for play. Exception the last two minutes of the half. (Similar to the Pro and College rule).

75% of the Officials polled nationwide want this rule.

75% of the Coaches in Maine do not want this rule.

Can we help Ralph out?