

## NFHS Flag Football Clarifications

August 25, 2025

1. While additional language was given to assist officials when calling Illegal Blocking Fouls, the rule book is evident –
  - a. 2.3.2 Screen Blocking is taking a position to obstruct the path of an opponent without contacting the opponent with any part of the blocker's body.
  - b. 9.3.2 ....a screen blocker may move to maintain legal position by moving in the same direction or path as the opponent.
  - c. If there is any contact during a screen block, there is a foul.
2. During a Declared Punt
  - a. After the snap, prior to the kick, the only K player who may move is the kicker.
  - b. After the snap, prior to the kick, the only restriction on R is crossing their Line of Scrimmage.
3. Handling of the ball
  - a. 7.3.1 Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.
  - b. 7.4.1 During any down, any player in possession may make a backward pass or may lose player possession through a fumble.
  - c. This is during any down. A punt is a down.
4. Forward Fumbles
  - a. Forward fumbles will be brought back to the spot of the fumble and next put into play by A at that spot. (exception – over on down when the necessary yardage was not gained by A)
  - b. A “forward fumble” where the ball carrier is clearly trying to gain advantage by tossing the ball forward to gain yardage could be ruled as an Illegal Forward Pass when the other criteria of Illegal Forward Pass are met.
5. Possession
  - a. 2.29.1 – A ball in player possession is a live ball held or controlled by a player after it has been handed or snapped to the player, or after the player has caught or recovered it.
  - b. A Player in possession may be downed by flag removal (or touch if a flag is missing)
  - c. Once a player has touched a ball and is attempting to gain “possession,” they are considered to have possession and can be downed at that spot.
  - d. Reasoning – Things this ruling will avoid

- i. This ruling will help in avoiding swatting at the ball (which can lead to contact) when the player is attempting to secure possession of a pass or a handoff. We do not want players trying to swat at a ball and knock it loose because they believe the ball carriers “do not yet have possession”.
- ii. This ruling will encourage players to “go for the flag” and help remove contact from the game.
- iii. There are other rule codes where a flag may not be pulled until “secure possession” has been gained. This allows the player to “muff” (juggle) the ball as they run down the field, gaining yardage without “possessing the ball” and allowing themselves to be downed. We don’t want this in our game.

case play –

1<sup>st</sup> and 6 at the A-14 – A45 jumps to catch a pass at the A-25. B22 pulls the flag of A45 as the ball touches the fingertips.

—ruling – A 1<sup>st</sup> and 15 at the A-25. Once A45 touched the ball and began the process of securing the loose ball, they can be downed by a flag pull.

1<sup>st</sup> and 6 at the A-14 – A22 rolls right and hands the ball to A28 at the A-13. B35 pulls the flag of A28 as the exchange of possession is happening at the A-13.

—ruling – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7 at the A-13. Once the transfer of possession has begun, A28 (and in this case, A22) may be de-flagged and downed at that spot. Both players would have possession, and either can be de-flagged and downed.

While attempting to secure possession of a handoff, A66 pins the ball to their back and is trying to bring it around to the front of themselves. While this is happening, B45 pulls the flag of A66 at the B-33 yard line.

--ruling A ball at the B-33 (unless 4<sup>th</sup> down was in play)