

TO: OHSAA Football Officials

FROM: Bruce Maurer, DOD & Beau Rugg, Sr. Director of Officiating & FB Administrator

Subject: The Kickoff and Other Free Kicks; OHSAA Experimental Rules Bulletin; 8/20/26

These Rulings supersede any previous ones you may have heard or read regarding the OHSAA Experimental Rule 6 - 1. **Abbreviations:** Kickoff (KO); Previous Spot (PS); Succeeding Spot (SS); Receiving Team (RT)

1. Rules 6-1-3a, b, and 6-1-4 will be treated as live ball fouls, as opposed to dead ball fouls in previous years. Since these fouls will be treated as live ball fouls, S7 will not be signaled (Rule 6-1 Penalty).
2. "We understand that the purpose of this experiment is to enhance player safety by potentially eliminating, or significantly reducing, the need for re-kicks. In addition to the safety benefit of not having to expose players to another kickoff, the belief is that it would enhance the efficiency of the game flow. Upon completion of the experiment, feedback will be provided to the NFHS Football Committee and NFHS Rules Review Committee." (Davis A. Whitfield, NFHS COO, Letter to Beau Rugg).
3. This Experimental Rule covers all types of Free Kicks & the KO in Rule 6, Section 1.
4. Enforcement (Rule 10-4-2g Exception): "The basic spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the succeeding spot for fouls by K, during a legal free or scrimmage kick down, (other than kick catch interference) prior to the end of the kick when K will not be next to put the ball in play". **Note:** The "hopper" for the enforcement is "either"/"or". These fouls can be enforced either at the PS or the SS.
5. Enforcement of a RT encroachment foul: This foul can be enforced either at the PS or the SS for the basis of this OHSAA Experimental Rule.
6. **Note:** Rule 6-1-11 (pop-up) is still a dead ball foul (player safety). No change this year.
7. **BJ Mechanics:** The most common foul for this Experimental Rule is an Encroachment Foul by K. We are used to sounding our whistle & shutting down this play. **BJ's** need to think prior to the KO that these are now live ball fouls & to not sound their whistle.
8. NFHS Case Book 6.1.3 Situation A: This is now a live ball foul committed by K so the whistle is not sounded. The RT will have the option of enforcing the Free Kick Infraction at the PS or the SS.
9. NFHS Case Book 6.1.3 Situation B: In (b) & (c) these are now live ball Free Kick Infraction fouls committed by K so the whistle is not sounded. The RT will have the option of enforcing the fouls at the PS or the SS.
10. NFHS Case Book 6.1.4: This is a live ball Free Kick Infraction foul committed by K so the whistle is not sounded. The RT will have the option of enforcing the foul at the PS or the SS.

11. OHSAA Experimental Rule Case Book Play # 1: K encroaches on the KO. R22 returns the KO to the RT 30 YL. **Ruling:** The RT has the option of either having the 5 yard penalty enforced at the PS (KO) or the succeeding spot at the RT 30 YL.
12. OHSAA Experimental Rule Case Book Play # 2: K encroaches on the KO. The **BJ** mistakenly sounds his/her whistle. **Ruling:** Inadvertent Whistle. **BJ** enforces the 5 Yard Penalty against K and re-kick.
13. OHSAA Experimental Rule Case Book Play # 3: K encroaches & executes a Pop-up Kick. **Ruling:** The **BJ** will enforce only the Pop-up Kick from the PS since that is a dead ball foul & occurs before the live ball encroachment foul.
14. OHSAA Experimental Rule Case Book Play # 4: K encroaches. The KO is returned by R1 who fumbles & K35 recovers the fumble. **Ruling:** Since the RT does not have possession at the end of the down, the encroachment foul will be enforced at the PS & re-kick.
15. OHSAA Experimental Rule Case Book Play # 5: Both the RT & K encroach. RT 37 catches the KO and advances to the R 20 YL. **Ruling:** Since both K & the RT committed live ball fouls prior to a change of possession, this is a double foul & they offset at the PS & re-kick.
16. OHSAA Experimental Rule Case Book Play # 6: K encroaches. The RT returns the KO for a TD. **Ruling:** Enforce the K encroachment foul on the Try only.
17. OHSAAFB.COM Website: Check our website Quiz # 1 for additional plays & rulings regarding the OHSAA Experimental Rule

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