



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

POSTSCRIMMAGE KICK ENFORCEMENT: RULE AND EXAMPLES

The rules for postscrimmage kick enforcement (PSK, Rule 10-2-3) have been changed in 2013 for ease of officiating and consistency with the intent of the rule. The fundamental principle behind PSK is this: during a scrimmage kick play---other than a try or a successful field goal attempt---certain fouls by the receiving team are treated as if possession has already gone over to them, even though by rule the kicking team is still in legal possession until the kick is over (Rule 2-4-1). This allows the receiving team to keep the ball rather than the down being repeated as would be the case under Rule 5-2-3. (PSK rules also do not apply in extra periods.)

Since PSK was added to the rules many years ago, one of the conditions has been that the foul in question must take place more three or more yards beyond the neutral zone. The other conditions were that the kick must cross the neutral zone, the foul must occur between the snap and the end of the kick, and Team B will next put the ball in play.

The rule for 2013 changes two of these conditions: the foul is during the *kick*, not the *kick play*, and it may take place *anywhere on the field*—not necessarily three or more yards downfield. Specific exceptions are the ones you would expect: roughing/running into the kicker and leaping over the shield---these are still enforced at the previous spot with the kicking team retaining possession. The penalty statement for these fouls specifies previous spot enforcement, to eliminate possible confusion.

The biggest change is the one that eliminates the three-yard-downfield requirement. Now, after the kick is away if a defensive lineman, for example, holds an opponent right at the line of scrimmage, the foul will be treated via PSK rules, the same as if the holding were three or more yards downfield.

Here are some examples that illustrate the changes to the rule and that also show that much of the rule remains the same.

EXAMPLES

1. Team A snaps on fourth down at the A-35. During the kick, B79 holds A55 at the (a) A-36; (b) at the A-40. B44 catches the kick at the B-25 and returns to the B-40 where he is tackled. **RULING:** (a) and (b) B79's foul is covered by

postscrimmage kick enforcement. The 10-yard penalty is enforced at the end of the kick, which is the B-25. First and 10 for Team B at the B-15.

Note: Prior to 2013 the accepted penalty in (a) would have been enforced at the previous spot with Team A still in possession.

2. Team A snaps the ball at the A-35 on fourth and seven. Just after the snap lineman B77 grabs guard A66 and pulls him to one side, allowing linebacker B63 to shoot the gap to try to block the kick. B44 catches the kick at the B-25 and returns to the B-40 where he is tackled. **RULING:** B77's holding foul is not covered by postscrimmage kick enforcement since it is before the kick. The 10-yard penalty is enforced at the previous spot. The penalty yardage gives Team A first down at the A-45.

3. Fourth and eight at the A-45. After the kick is away, defensive lineman B66 clips A88 behind the neutral zone at the A-40. B44 catches the kick at the B-26 and returns to the B-40 where he is tackled. **RULING:** The foul by B66 is governed by postscrimmage kick rules. The penalty is enforced at the end of the kick, which is the basic spot on this play, half the distance to the goal. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-13.

Note: In previous years this would not have been a PSK foul since it was committed behind the neutral zone. Penalty enforcement would have been at the previous spot with a first down for Team A.

4. On a punt that crosses the neutral zone Team B is flagged for roughing the kicker. **RULING:** 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and an automatic first down for Team A.

Note: As always, the penalty for roughing the kicker is enforced at the previous spot and carries an automatic first down, even though the foul takes place during the kick. No change from previous years.

5. Team A snaps at the A-35 and punts. B22 catches the kick at the B-25 and is tackled at the B-45. During the return B55 blocks below the waist at the B-40. **RULING:** B55's foul does not come under PSK rules (and never has). When B22 catches the ball, that ends the kick, and thus the foul takes place during a running play. The basic spot is the end of the run, the B-45, and not the end of the kick. The penalty is enforced at the spot of the foul, the B-40, by the 3-and-1 principle (Rule 10-2-2-d-2). Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-25.

6. Same as Play 5 except that the foul by B55 occurs *before* B22 catches the ball. **RULING:** B55's foul is governed by PSK rules. The B-25 is the basic spot, so the penalty is enforced at that point since the foul occurs beyond the basic spot. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-12.5.

Rogers Redding
National Coordinator of Football Officials
May 2013