

## 2018 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 13a

Amend Rule 6, Section 1 & 2 (Procedures For A Free Kick, pgs. 25-26) (new language underlined, deleted language struck through) for one year only:

**ARTICLE 2. RESTRAINING LINES.** The restraining lines for a free kick shall be as follows, unless they are adjusted because of a distance penalty:

- (a) The restraining line for the kicking team shall be its 35-yard line for a kickoff and its 20-yard line for a safety kick.
- (b) The restraining line for the receiving team shall be the yard line 10 yards in advance of the kicking team's restraining line.

**ARTICLE 3. FREE KICK FORMATION.** When the ball is kicked on a free kick down:

- (a) Before the kicker approaches the ball and until the ball is kicked, ~~After the ball has been made ready for play~~

(1) all kicking team (Team A) players other than the kicker must be lined up and remain in their established position no more than ~~five yards~~ one yard behind their restraining line; and

(2) ~~At least four~~ five players of the kicking team must be on each side of the ball. At least ~~three~~ two players must be lined up outside the yard-line number, and two players between the inbounds lines and the yard-line number ~~each inbounds line, one of whom must be outside the yard-line number.~~

**Notes:**

(1) A holder for a free kick counts as one of the required ~~four~~ five players, regardless of where he is positioned.

(2) A player who lines up one yard behind the restraining line must have at least one foot (either the front or the back foot) touching that yard line.

- (b) All kicking team players must be inbounds and behind the ball when it is kicked, except:

(1) the holder of a placekick (3-18-1-Item 2) may be beyond the line, and

(2) the kicker may be beyond the line, provided that his kicking foot is not beyond the line.

~~(c) At least four players of the kicking team must be on each side of the ball. At least three players must be lined up outside each inbounds line, one of whom must be outside the yard line number.~~

*Note: A holder for a free kick counts as one of the required four five players, regardless of where he is positioned.*

~~(d) All receiving team (Team B) players must be inbounds and behind their restraining line until the ball is kicked. Until the ball is kicked, all receiving team (Team B) players must be inbounds and behind their restraining line, and at least eight players must be positioned between their restraining line and a spot 15 yards behind their restraining line (the "setup zone").~~

**Penalty: For a player being beyond the restraining line when the ball is kicked (offside), a player being out of bounds when the ball is kicked, a kicking team player other than the kicker being more than five one yards behind his restraining line, or either the kicking team being in an illegal formation when the ball is kicked: Loss of five yards.**

~~(e) After the ball is kicked, a double team block is permissible only within the setup zone by players who were initially lined up in the setup zone no more than two receiving team players may intentionally form a wedge in an attempt to block for the runner. An illegal wedge is defined as three or more players lined up shoulder to shoulder within two yards of each other.~~

*Note: This does not apply when the kicking team lines up in an obvious onside kick formation.*

**~~Penalty: For players intentionally forming an illegal wedge: Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul. If the foul occurs in Team B's end zone during the kick, it is enforced from the previous spot.~~**

**ARTICLE 4. CATCH OR RECOVERY OF A FREE KICK.** The following applies to the catch or recovery of a free kick:

(a) If a player of the receiving team catches or recovers the ball, he may advance.

(b) If the ball is declared dead while in the simultaneous possession of two opposing players, the ball is awarded to the receiving team.

(c) A player of the kicking team may legally touch, catch, or recover the ball if:

(1) it first touches a receiving team player; or

(2) it reaches or crosses the receiving team's restraining line.

(d) The ball is dead if:

(1) it is caught or recovered by a player of the kicking team. If the catch or recovery is legal, the ball belongs to the kicking team at the dead-ball spot;

(2) it is not touched by the receiving team and touches the ground in the end zone (touchback).

- (e) If the ball comes to rest inbounds after reaching the receiving team's restraining line and no player attempts to possess it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot.

*Note: For illegal catch or recovery, see 6-2-4.*

**ARTICLE 5. FREE KICK CROSSES GOAL LINE.** It is a touchback, if a free kick:

(a) is not touched by the receiving team, and the ball touches the ground in the end zone.

(b) goes out of bounds behind the receiving team's goal line;

(c) strikes the receiving team's goal post, uprights, or cross bar; or

(d) is downed in the end zone by the receiving team.

**ARTICLE 6. END OF FREE KICK.** A free kick ends when either team possesses the ball, or when the ball is dead, if that precedes possession. A running play begins when the receiving team establishes possession of the ball.

## **SECTION 2 OTHER FREE KICK FOULS**

### **ARTICLE 1. BLOCKING.**

**Item 1. Kicking Team.** Prior to the ball touching a receiving team player or reaching the receiving team's restraining line, ~~he~~ a kicking team player may not block or use his hands or arms against an opponent between the restraining lines, except to push or pull aside a receiver who is actively attempting to obstruct his attempt to proceed downfield.

After the ball touches a receiving team player, or has reached the receiver's restraining line, a kicking team player may legally block an opponent, and he may use his hands and arms to push or pull an opponent out of the way in a personal attempt to recover the ball.

Regardless of the location of the ball, ~~he~~ a kicking team player may legally block an opponent at or beyond the receiving team's restraining line. During the kick, the kicking team is subject to the blocking restrictions of the defense.

### **Item 2. Receiving Team.**

- (a) After the ball is kicked, receiving team players are subject to the blocking restrictions of the offense (see 12-1-1-3), and they may use their hands/arms legally to push or pull an opponent out of the way in a personal attempt to recover the ball.

- (b) Until the ball is touched or the ball hits the ground, no player on the receiving team may cross its restraining line, or initiate a block against the kicking team in the 15-yard area between the kickoff team's (Team A) restraining line and five yards behind the receiving team's (Team B) restraining line.
- (c) After the ball is kicked, a double-team block is permissible only within the setup zone by players who were initially lined up in the setup zone. ~~no more than two receiving team players may intentionally form a wedge in an attempt to block for the runner. An illegal wedge is defined as three or more players lined up shoulder-to-shoulder within two yards of each other.~~ A double-team block is defined as two players from the setup zone coming together in an attempt to block for the runner.

*Note: A "wedge block" is not permitted at any time. A wedge block is defined as two or more players intentionally aligning shoulder-to-shoulder within two yards of each other, and who move forward together in an attempt to block for the runner.*

- (d) After the ball is kicked, no player who was initially lined up outside the setup zone ~~on the receiving team~~ is permitted to come together with any other player (double-team) ~~outside the setup zone~~ in an attempt to block for the runner.

**Penalty: For illegal blocking or use of hands by either team: Loss of 10 yards. See 12-2-5 for penalty for a low block.**

**For players intentionally forming an illegal wedge: Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul. If the foul occurs in Team B's end zone during the kick, it is enforced from the previous spot.**

Submitted by Competition Committee

*Effect:* Modifies the kickoff play for one year only.

*Reason:* Player safety.

<u>VOTE</u>	<u>DISPOSITION</u>
For _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted
Against _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Rejected
Abstain _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tabled
Absent _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn

## Kickoff Proposal – Summary of Changes

<b>CURRENT RULE</b>	<b>PROPOSED CHANGES</b>
Kickoff team must have at least 4 players on each side of the ball	Kickoff Team must have 5 players on each side of the ball (5x5 alignment)
Kickoff team cannot line up more than 5 yards from restraining line (30-yard line for kickoff at 35)	Kickoff team cannot line up more than 1 yard from restraining line (34-yard line for kickoff at 35) <i>Effect: players will not have a running start to run downfield after kick</i>
At least 3 players on kickoff team must be lined up outside each inbounds line, one of whom must be outside the yard-line number.	At least 2 players must be lined up outside the yard-line number and 2 players between the inbounds line and the yard-line number
All kickoff return team players must be behind their restraining line	At least 8 players must be in 15-yard “setup zone” prior to the kickoff; only 3 players can remain outside of the setup zone <i>Effect: moves more players on kickoff return closer to where ball is kicked to reduce speed and space on the play</i>
Only 2-man wedge blocks permitted; can take place anywhere on the field	No wedge blocks are permitted. Only players who were initially lined up in the setup zone may come together in a double-team block <i>Effect: Limits the blocking schemes permitted by personnel on the kickoff return team</i>
Players on the receiving team can move beyond their restraining line and block players on the kicking team after the ball is kicked	Until the ball is touched or the ball hits the ground, no player on the receiving team may cross its restraining line, or initiate a block against the kicking team in the 15-yard area from the kicking team’s restraining line. <i>Effect: Eliminates the “jump-set/attack” block</i>
The ball is dead if it is downed in the end zone by the receiving team	The ball is dead if it is not touched by the receiving team and touches the ground in the end zone (touchback) <i>Effect: no requirement for kickoff returner to “down” the ball in end zone</i>

## 2018 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 12

Amend Rule 15, Section 2, Articles 2, 3 and 5 (Replay Official's Request for Review, pg. 65) (new language underlined, deleted language struck through):

**ARTICLE 2. ~~REPLAY OFFICIAL'S~~ REQUEST FOR REVIEW.** A Replay Review will be initiated by a member of the NFL's Officiating department from a location in the League office or a Replay Official from a Replay Booth comparable to the location of the coaches' booth or Press Box when the on-field ruling is:

- (a) a score for either team;
- (b) an interception;
- (c) a fumble or backward pass that is recovered by an opponent or goes out of bounds through an opponent's end zone;
- (d) a muffed scrimmage kick recovered by the kicking team;
- (e) after the two-minute warning of each half; ~~and~~
- (f) throughout any overtime period; and
- (g) any disqualification of a player.

There is no limit to the number of Replay Reviews that may be initiated by personnel designated in this Article ~~by the Replay Official~~. The ~~Replay Official's~~ ability of the designated personnel to initiate a review will be unrelated to the number of timeouts that either team has remaining, and no timeout will be charged for any review initiated pursuant to this Article ~~by the Replay Official~~. The designated personnel ~~Replay Official~~ must initiate a review before the ball is next legally put in play.

**ARTICLE 3. REPLAY REVIEWS.** All Replay Reviews will be conducted by a designated member of the Officiating department at the League office. During the review of on-field rulings other than player disqualifications, the designee shall consult with the Referee, who will have access to a hand-held, field-level device. A decision will be reversed only when there is *clear and obvious visual evidence* available that warrants the change. Prior to consulting with the Officiating department designee, the Referee will discuss the play with the covering official(s) to gather any information that may be pertinent to the review.

Each review will be a maximum of 60 seconds in length, timed from when the hand-held, field-level device is provided to the Referee.

Unless the Replay Review is for a player disqualification, All reviewable aspects of the play may be examined and are subject to reversal, even if not identified in a coach's challenge or if not the specific reason for a ~~Replay Official's~~ request for review initiated by a member of the NFL's Officiating department or the Replay Official.

**ARTICLE 5. REVIEWABLE PLAYS.** The Replay System will cover the following play situations:

- (a) Plays involving possession.
- (b) Plays involving touching of either the ball or the ground.
- (c) Plays governed by the goal line.
- (d) Plays governed by the boundary lines.
- (e) Plays governed by the line of scrimmage.
- (f) Plays governed by the line to gain.
- (g) Number of players on the field at the snap, even when a foul is not called.
- (h) Game administration:
  - (1) Penalty enforcement.
  - (2) Proper down.
  - (3) Spot of a foul.
  - (4) Status of the game clock.
- (i) Disqualification of a player.

Submitted by Competition Committee

*Effect:* Expands reviewable plays to include a disqualification of a player.

*Reason:* Permits the Instant Replay system to correct an officiating error that resulted in the disqualification of a player.

<u><b>VOTE</b></u>		<u><b>DISPOSITION</b></u>	
For	_____	Adopted	
Against	_____	Rejected	
Abstain	_____	Tabled	
Absent	_____	Withdrawn	