

Football: Volume I, Bulletin 4
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Sideline Infractions – We Must Know the Rules

Sideline infractions can be confusing as there are three rule areas that come into play. First, let's start with the obvious first two – Unintentional contact on an official in the restricted area (9-4-8) and nonplayers outside of the team box (9-8-3). These are two separate rules and will never be paired together for any enforcement. The first is a personal contact foul. The penalty is 15 yards each and every time it may occur. On the second (and any subsequent) contact foul inside the restricted area, the head coach (or replacement head coach) is ejected as well. This is not an UNS foul.

The second is a foul with progressive enforcement – warning (1st offense), 5 yards (2nd) and 15 yards (3rd and subsequent). This last foul in the progression is also a nonplayer UNS foul, but there is not automatic ejection for the head coach. However, it may result in the ejection of the head coach (or any other individual) if it is the second UNS they receive that game (9-8 Penalty). Here's a few scenarios:

Assistant coach bumps official outside of restricted area, then the same coach is later observed out of team box when the ball is live. Ruling: The first results in a 15-yard penalty and the second results in a sideline warning.

The crew calls three sideline infractions on a team for being out of the team box while the ball is live. Then, the head coach screams an obscenity and receives an UNS foul. Ruling: The first three result in a warning, 5-yard penalty and 15-yard penalty. The 15-yard penalty is an UNS foul on the head coach. When he receives a second UNS later in the game, he is ejected.

The crew calls two sideline infractions on a team for being out of the team box while the ball is live. Then, an assistant coach bumps into the official in the restricted area. The same assistant coach then receives an UNS foul for arguing that penalty. Later on, the team receives another sideline infraction. Ruling: The first two result in a warning and 5-yard penalty. When contact is made with the official, the result is a 15-yard penalty. Then the assistant is given an UNS 15-yard penalty. When the team receives the third sideline infraction, a 15-yard penalty is assessed and this is an UNS on the head coach. There is no automatic ejections under these combination of fouls. The head coach is now at risk of being ejected if any of the following occur during the remainder of the game: (1) Contact with an official inside the restricted area (2) Another sideline infraction (3) If HE receives any other UNS foul.

Something to Consider

As B2 attempts to tackle A1, his fingers go into the ear hole of the runner's helmet and he pulls him down to the ground. Is this a foul?

Last Week's Consideration

4th and 15 from B's 40. A1 runs and is brought down on B's 35. During the down, a B player runs onto the field but does not participate. What's the ruling? Check back next bulletin for the proper ruling.

Ruling: Illegal substitution (3-7-6). The result is B's ball, 1st and 10 on B's 30.