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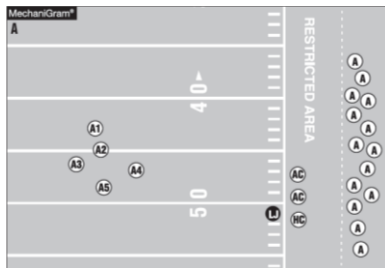
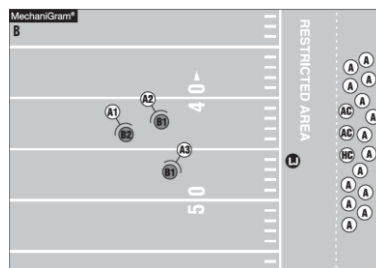
NFHS Football Weekly Rule Interpretations

Team Boxes – Restricted Area on Sideline

Rules References: 1-2-3g; 9-4-8; 9-4-8 PENALTY; 9-8-1k; 9-8-3; 9-8-1k, 3 PENALTY

Team boxes shall be marked on each side of the field outside the coaches' area between the 25-yard lines for use of coaches, substitutes, athletic trainers, etc., affiliated with the team. The coaches' area is a minimum of a 2-yard belt between the front of the team box and the sideline, and becomes a restricted area when the ball is live.

A nonplayer shall not be outside his team box unless to become a player or to return as a replaced player. A maximum of three coaches may be in the restricted area. No player, nonplayer or coach shall be in the restricted area when the ball is live.



When the ball is dead, a maximum of three coaches may be in the restricted area (MechaniGram A). Once the ball is snapped, no nonplayer may be in the restricted area (MechaniGram B).

When nonplayers are outside of the team box area, or anyone is in the restricted area while the ball is live, game officials will give a sideline warning to the team involved. A second offense results in a 5-yard penalty. All subsequent offenses result in 15-yard penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, which are charged to the head coach. If a game official unintentionally contacts a coach or other nonplayer in the restricted area while the ball is live, the team is assessed a 15-yard penalty for a nonplayer, illegal personal contact foul. As a nonplayer foul, the penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot. A second such offense would result in the head coach's disqualification. Unlike a foul for sideline interference (non-contact, Rule 9-8-1k or 9-8-3), no warning or 5-yard penalty is required in this situation.

SITUATION 1: In the first period, Team A is warned and then later penalized 5 yards for sideline interference for having more than three coaches or for having nonplayers in the restricted area between the sideline and the team box. The same infraction occurs again in the third period and again in the fourth period. How are these situations penalized? **RULING:** The third and fourth infractions are both 15-yard penalties. Since the head coach is responsible for the team box, the fouls are all charged to the

head coach. The second penalty for a 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul results in the disqualification of the head coach. **COMMENT:** The 2-yard belt becomes a restricted area when the ball becomes live. (1-2-3g, 9-8-3)

SITUATION 2: Third and five for A on B's 30-yard line when B1 intercepts A1's pass at B's 15-yard line. B1 returns the interception along A's sideline and is downed on A's 40-yard line. During B1's run, the head line judge unintentionally runs into: (a) a cameraman between the restraining line and sideline at B's 20-yard line; (b) A's assistant coach in the restricted area at B's 45-yard line; or (c) A's head coach on the field of play at the 50-yard line. **RULING:** No foul in (a), but the game administrator must ensure the area between the playing field and the restraining line is clear of all non-authorized personnel. In (b) and (c) A's head coach is assessed a 15-yard non-player, illegal personal contact penalty at the succeeding spot. A second offense would result in a disqualification of the head coach. (9-4-8)

SITUATION 3: A1 throws a forward pass that is intercepted by B1 on B's 30-yard line and returned 70 yards along the B sideline for a B touchdown. During B1's run, the covering official is forced to change his course to run around an assistant team B coach who is in B's restricted area. The covering official drops his flag near B's restricted area. Later during the return, B12, a nonplayer, leaves the team box and runs alongside (yet out of bounds) B1 all the way to the goal line. B12 never enters the field of play during the down. The referee flags B12 for a nonplayer foul. **RULING:** Team B has committed two separate nonplayer fouls during this play, which cannot be combined to create a multiple foul. Team B's assistant coach has committed a violation of 9-8-3 for being in the restricted area while the ball is live while B12 has violated 9-8-1k and 9-8-3 by being outside his team box. Both fouls are administered. The first foul results in a sideline warning. The second violation is a 5-yard sideline interference foul for which the offended team may take the penalty on the try or the subsequent kickoff. (8-2-4, 9-4-8, 9-8-1k, 9-8-3, 10-2-4, 10-2-5)

SITUATION 4: In the first period, the assistant coach for Team A accidentally collides with the line judge while the line judge is covering a play. Team A is penalized 15 yards for illegal personal contact by a nonplayer. In the second period, the back judge is covering a play near the sideline and observes an assistant in the restricted area during the play. **RULING:** This constitutes the first warning for Team A for violation of the restricted area and is not penalized in terms of yards. The occurrences of the illegal personal contact foul and the restricted area violation are not combined for penalty enforcement purposes. (9-4-8, 9-8-1k)

SITUATION 5: A1 is illegally in motion at the snap. The play goes to the sideline where one of B's coaches makes unintentional contact with a game official (9-4-8). **RULING:** Both fouls will be penalized, first the live-ball foul for A's illegal motion, then the 15 yards for unintentional contact in the restricted area. The 9-4-8 foul is a nonplayer foul and is therefore penalized as a dead-ball foul, even though the contact occurred during a live ball. (2-16-2f, 10-4-5c)