

RTO Video Clip Observation Notes 9/13/2019

Play #1 The first play on this week's Observer's Plays of Interest is a passing play where the QB is under pressure from the defense and is nearly sacked before throwing a last second forward pass. Is this an illegal pass thrown to into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver; or a forward pass intentionally thrown incomplete to avoid the sack? Note that the QB has to shovel the ball to throw it forward. Does that make a difference? Also reference rule 7-5-2-d & e and you will see that just because there is a receiver in the area, does not rule out intentional grounding.

The Referee is following the action and has a good look at the entire play. At the end of the down he looks to the Line Judge for confirmation that the throw was not "dumped"; rather, it was a legitimate attempt at a pass completion, as player #2 was a reasonable target. This is a judgement call made by the Referee after he confirms with his Line Judge that the incomplete pass was legal. The PA announcer did not help in this situation, as he described the action as "grounding the ball".

Play #2 First and ten from the 41 yard line. The QB throws a long pass downfield which is incomplete. The Back Judge throws a flag in the secondary and moves quickly to inform the Referee of holding on the defense. The Referee's preliminary signal is holding on the offense, but it is apparent that the foul is on the defense. The Referee does correct his signal after the Line Judge intercedes. During the penalty enforcement following the foul, the Umpire does start from the previous spot; however, he marks off 12 yards and places the ball at the 29 yard line.

The Head Linesman waits near the previous spot for the Umpire to march off the yardage. As he heads down field he corrects the Umpire, who moves it back to the 30 yard line. The Line Judge does not hold the previous spot, but proceeds downfield to the enforcement spot. The succeeding spot should have been the 31 yard line, first and 10 for the offense. The proper mechanic specifies that the Linesman mirror the Umpire with his own yardage mark off, while the Line Judge holds the enforcement spot as a final check. As a crew, all members have specific duties and responsibilities in order to ensure proper enforcement of penalties. Proper mechanics executed by each member of the officiating crew are essential to ensure correct enforcements.

Play #3 Second and thirteen at the 47 yard line. Wide receiver #10 breaks the huddle and moves out wide in the formation. Is he set before he goes in motion? Keep an eye on the QB as #10 goes in motion by him; does he initiate a shift to go under center. At the snap, is #10 moving forward? The Referee is primarily responsible to make sure that all eleven players on offense are set for one second prior to sending a man in motion. The side official has the primary responsibility for the man going in motion away from his position, in order to determine if he is moving forward at the snap. On this play, we never have all eleven players set for one second or more, so at the very least the offense has shifted illegally. If the man in motion was moving forward at the snap, that would illegal motion.

Play #4 This play illustrates well-choreographed accordion action by all five officials. At the start of the down all five officials are in their proper positions and ready to go. Player counts for both offense and defense are visible by the officials. The offense runs a quick dive play to the Line Judge's side for a short gain. The Line Judge properly signals the dead ball to start the 40 second clock while he gives the Umpire the primary progress spot. Both the Referee and the Back Judge move to within 10 yards of the line of scrimmage, and the Linesman moves onto the field as well. The hustle of the crew should be noted as that is what is expected. As the players clear to their respective huddles, all officials are

perfectly bracketing the playing area. The Umpire spots the ball and the officials all retreat in unison back to their starting positions. Well done!