

2015 REPLAY QUIZ #9

1. 1/10 @ B-25. A7's pass to A86 on the sideline at the B-10 is ruled incomplete. Video shows that A86 controlled the pass while airborne, then:
- was contacted by B39 so that his left foot touched inbounds and his right foot touched out of bounds, and he lost control of the ball as he contacted the ground out of bounds.

Confirm the ruling on the field. A - 2/10 @ B-25. If a player goes to the ground in the act of catching a pass, he must maintain complete and continuous control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground. (See Rule 2-4-3-b.)

- touched with his left foot inbounds and his right foot out of bounds, after which he was contacted by B39, causing him to lose control of the ball.

Reverse to a completed pass. A - 1/G @ B-10. When a receiver has completed all of the elements of a catch -- and is upright and would have remained upright except for the contact -- the ball is dead when he touches the ground out of bounds. (See 2015 Replay Case #37.)*

2. 2/15 @ B-25. A7's pass to A86 in the center of the end zone is ruled incomplete. Video shows that A86 controlled the pass while airborne, then:

- was contacted by B39 so that both feet touched in the end zone, but he lost control of the ball as he fell to the ground, and it touched the ground before he could regain control.

Confirm the ruling on the field. A - 3/15 @ B-25. If a player loses control of the ball which then touches the ground before he regains control, it is not a catch. If he regains control inbounds prior to the ball touching the ground, it is a catch. (See Rule 2-4-3-b.)

- touched with both feet in the end zone, after which he was contacted by B39, causing him to go to the ground and lose control of the ball, which then touched the ground before he could regain control.

Reverse to a completed pass. Touchdown. If a receiver has completed all of the elements of a catch in B's end zone and remains upright with the ball firmly in his control, the ball is dead and it is a touchdown. (See 2015 Replay Case #32.)*

3. 3/5 @ B-25. A7's pass to A86 between the hashes at the B-2 is ruled incomplete. Video shows that A86 controlled the pass while airborne, contacted the ground with his left foot, then:

- extended the ball over the goal line, but lost control of the ball as he fell to the ground, and it touched the ground before he could regain control.

Confirm the ruling on the field. A - 4/5 @ B-25. While the receiver controlled the pass and touched the ground inbounds, he did not maintain control of the ball long enough to perform an act common to the game. (See Rule 2-4-3-a-3.)

- planted his right foot, turned toward and lunged for the goal line, extending the ball over the goal line, but losing control of it as he fell to the ground, which then touched the ground before he could regain control.

Reverse to a completed pass. Touchdown. The receiver performed a second act that was visually and distinctly not part of the catch when he changed direction and lunged for the goal line. (See 2015 Replay Case #30.)*

**** These plays were presented to illustrate the sometimes razor-thin line between catch and no-catch. Each was written using the language of a rule or case play, and as such they are reasonably easy to differentiate. Seen live, the best advice is given in the Note following 2015 Replay Case #32:***

"If there is any question of whether the catch has been completed...then the pass is incomplete."

Though contained in the Replay Case Book, the above sounds more applicable to on-field officials. For replay:

If there is any question as to whether or not it is a catch, then the ruling on the field should stand.

Replay officials -- experienced, new, and prospective -- must remember that slow-motion can make almost anything "close" look like a catch. If it looks like an incomplete pass in full speed, frame-by-frame may be your enemy. And, as recent experiences from the NFL have shown, what constitutes a "catch" continues to evolve.