

Flag Rule Clarification (FUMBLE/MUFF/BACKWARDS PASS)

Rule 4. Ball in Play, Dead Ball and Out of Bounds

Sect 2. Dead Ball and End of the Down

Art 2. The ball becomes dead and the down is ended:

g. When any loose ball:

2. That is a fumble, muff or backwards pass touches the ground.

Summary:

A fumble, muff or backwards pass that touches the ground is dead. If the fumble, muff or backwards pass touches the ground between the goal lines, the ball belongs to team A.

- A. If the ball touches the ground or goes out of bounds **BEYOND** the spot of the fumble, muff or backwards pass, mark the dead ball spot where the runner lost possession.
- B. If the ball touches the ground or goes out of bounds **BEHIND** the spot of the fumble, muff or backwards pass, mark the dead ball spot where the ball touches the ground or the inbounds spot where the ball crossed the sideline.

Exceptions:

- 1. If the dead ball spot (*in A or B above*) of the fumble, muff or backwards pass occurs during a 4th down play that does not reach the line to gain, it will become B's ball as a turnover on downs.
- 2. If the dead ball spot is in the **OPPONENT'S END ZONE**, or touches the **PYLON**, it is a **TOUCHBACK**.
- 3. If the dead ball spot is in the **TEAM IN POSSESSION'S END ZONE**, it is a **SAFETY**.

Case Plays:

Play #1

Fourth and 2 at A's 38. A-1 takes the snap and, from A's 35 throws a backward pass to A-2 who muffs the ball. The ball lands at:

- a) A's 30
- b) A's 39

Ruling

- a) It shall be B's ball 1st & 10 from A's 30-yard line. (Example B)
- b) It shall be B's ball 1st & 15 from A's 35-yard line. (Example A)

Play #2

While standing in the field of play, A-1's fumble lands in:

- a) A's end zone
- b) B's end zone

Ruling

- a) Safety, 2 points for B. The next snap will be from B's 30-yard line, 1st & 10 for team B. (*Exception #3*)
- b) Touchback, the next snap will be from B's 14-yard line, 1st & 6 for team B. (*Exception #2*)

Play #3

While standing in A's end zone, A-1's fumble lands in the field of play at A's 2-yard line:

Ruling

The ball is returned to the spot of the fumble. Safety, 2 points for B. The next snap will be from B's 30-yard line, 1st & 10 for team B. (*Exception #3*)