

Next Level Football Officiating

END OF PLAY

1. The ankle or wrist are considered part of the foot or hand.

A runner is down when any part of his body other than a hand or foot touches the ground (the ankle or wrist are considered part of the foot or hand, respectively). Additionally, a runner is not down if any part of his body touches another player (teammate or opponent) who is lying on the ground.

2. When judging forward progress, if a runner appears to be stopped, he should be given an opportunity to escape.

If a runner is stopped, forward progress is marked at the ball's farthest advance. If he breaks free and renews his charge, or runs backward of his own accord, progress is marked at the farthest ball point of his subsequent advance.

The most judgmental scenario occurs when a runner breaks free and renews his charge, but staggers and goes down without further contact by the defense. In that situation, "down by contact" is a factor. If the official judges the runner went down as a result of the initial contact, the runner is entitled to forward progress at the spot he was first contacted. If not, forward progress is marked

at the spot he went down. When a runner is taken backward, the spirit of the rule entitles him the spot where he was originally contacted unless he is subsequently able to move forward under his own power. Whether the defense continually maintains contact with the runner is not a factor.

3. If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, consider it a legal hit.

A runner tightroping the sideline presents a challenge for opponents as well as officials. If the defender holds up, thinking he is risking a penalty for a hit out of bounds, the runner will continue to advance. On the other hand, a late hit can lead to player injury or the precursor to a confrontation.

As long as the runner is clearly inbounds, and the contact is otherwise legal (e.g. not a horse-collar, striking blow, etc.), consider the hit legal.

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