



PLAYER EQUIPMENT ISSUES DURING THE GAME

This Bulletin will discuss three areas of equipment issues that may occur during the game and scenarios for each:

Helmet Comes off During Play

When a player's helmet comes off on the field during play, the rules require that player discontinue participating beyond the currently-engaged action. This means he may complete the block if engaged, but may not advance to another block or continue to pursue a runner if on defense. If a helmet comes off of a runner, the ball becomes dead and the down is ended immediately. If a player that loses his helmet continues to participate during the play beyond his immediate action while the ball is live, it is a live ball foul for illegal participation.

If the helmet comes off as a direct result of a foul by an opponent (e.g., *illegal helmet conduct, illegal use of hands to the helmet area, facemask, etc.*) - not simply that a foul occurs during the down - then the player may remain in the game. Otherwise, the player must be removed from the game for at least one down. The only exceptions are when it occurs at the end of the second period, the end of the fourth period or the end of an OT. A TEAM TIMEOUT CANNOT BE TAKEN TO "SAVE" THE PLAYER AND ALLOW HIM TO PLAY THE NEXT DOWN.

Required Equipment is Worn Improperly or Not Worn

Because it has been a special point of emphasis, this section will refer to knee pads, but this applies for any required piece of equipment.

If a player is not wear kneepads at all, the rules require that player is removed for at least one down to correct the violation. If, however, the player has knee pads but is not wearing them so that they

cover the knee and are covered by the uniform pants, he should be instructed to adjust them so that they are worn properly. If it becomes necessary to continue to remind the player to wear his knee pads properly, that player should be removed from the game until it can be corrected. If removed, it is treated the same as if a helmet were to come off during play: only halftime or an OT intermission can "save" the player from missing the next down.

Let's say, though, that as you're instructing the player to adjust his knee pads, the head coach overhears you and calls a timeout so that the violation can be corrected. Since an official's timeout was never taken to remove the player from the field, this player would still be permitted to return to play the next down.

Repair of Equipment

Repairing an unsnapped chin guard, a broken face mask or a shoulder pad is not the same as wearing pads incorrectly. If these can be fixed on the field without assistance and without delaying the Referee's ready-for-play more than 25 seconds, they should be permitted to do so. If it requires the assistance of sideline personnel or will delay the RFP (more than 25 seconds), the player must be removed for a down. Unlike the previous scenarios, though, a head coach MAY USE A TEAM TIMEOUT IN ORDER TO "SAVE" THE PLAYER AND ALLOW HIM TO PLAY THE NEXT DOWN.

Knowing these variations of equipment rules will assist with consistency of enforcement across the state and will ultimately improve the safety of players on the field.

RULES REVIEW:

The last Rules Review asked your opinion on the sudden action by an offense seen [HERE](#). This action appears to be coordinated for the purpose of causing B to encroach and should be flagged against the offense.

This week's question is in regards to requirement to have five players numbered 50-79 on the LOS.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a rules video for this week, then [CLICK HERE](#) to give us your ruling of the play.