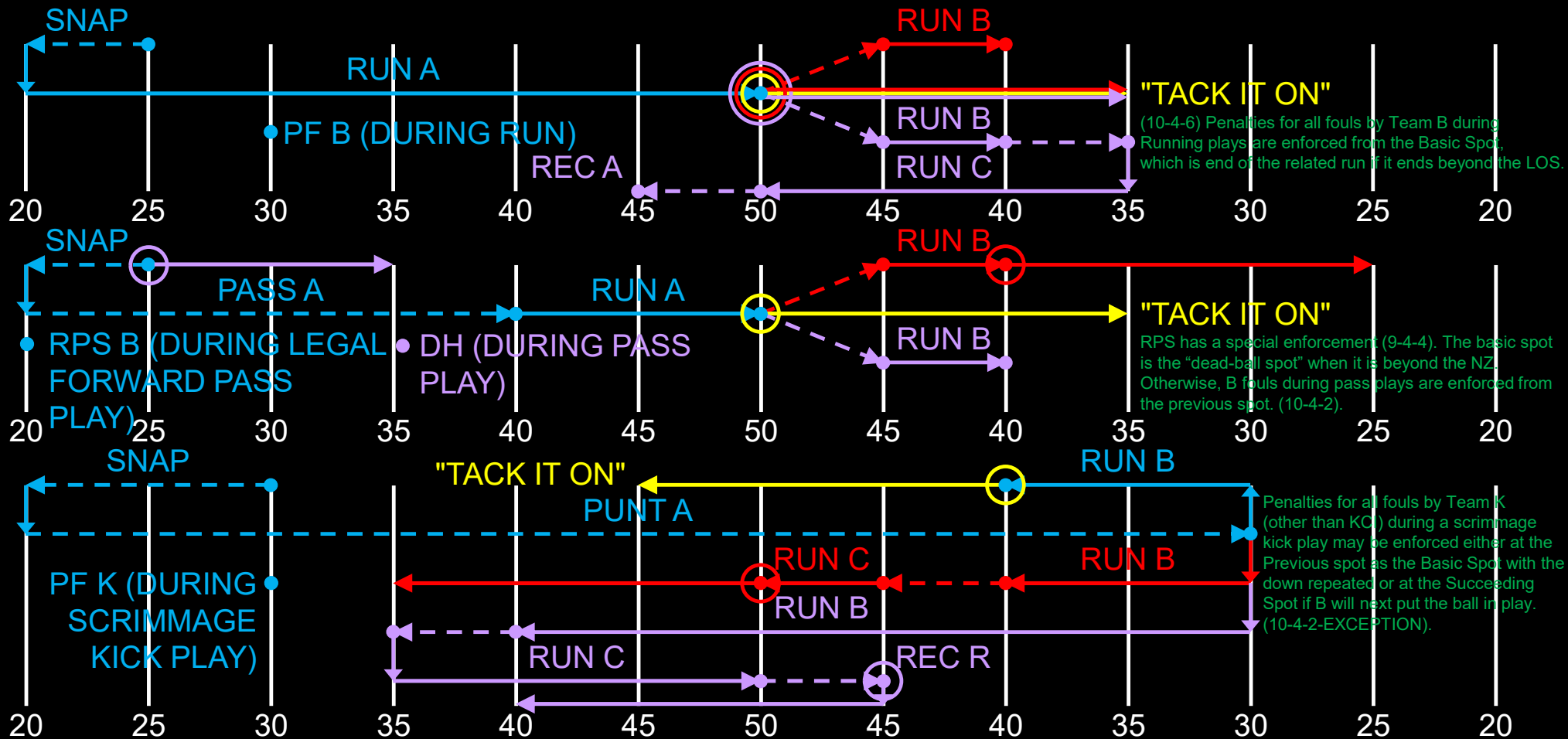


Use the Right Words #3 – “Tack It On”



NFHS Football 2026

When R Muffs a Kick

The following plays have all been interpreted in writing by Will McKoy from the MHSAA.

When R Muff's a Kick

6-5-6 – While any free kick is in flight in or beyond the NZ to the receiver's goal line or any scrimmage kick is in flight beyond the NZ to the receiver's goal line, K shall not:

- a – Touch the ball or R, unless blocked into the ball or R, or to ward off a blocker; or
- b – Obstruct R's path to the ball.

This prohibition applies even when no fair-catch signal is given, but it does not apply (1) after a free kick has been touched by a receiver, or (2) after a scrimmage kick has been touched by a receiver who was clearly beyond the NZ at the time of touching.

EXCEPTION: K may catch, touch, muff or bat a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the NZ if no player of R is in position to catch the ball.

6.5.6. SITUATION E: While K1's punt is in flight beyond the NZ, R2 ...

- (a) gives a valid fair catch signal or
- (b) does not give a signal.

The ball strikes R2 on the shoulder and bounces high into the air. While the loose ball is still airborne, K4 pushes R2 in the chest and K4 catches the ball at that spot.

RULING: In both cases, the ball is dead when K4 catches it. There is no foul for KCI since R2's protection ended when the kick was touched.

6.5.2 SITUATION A: During a scrimmage kick beyond the expanded NZ, R1 gives a valid fair-catch signal. He muffs the kick into the air, where ...

- (b) K2 pushes R1 in an attempt to reach the ball; or
 - (c) K3 tackles R1 following the muff, preventing him from catching the kick.
- (* Not in Case Book but official interpretation by MHSAA) K3 lowers his shoulder and hits R1 in the chest, knocking him to the ground

RULING:

In (b) the contact on R1 by K2 is legal because K may retain possession following the muff by R1.

In (c) it is a holding foul for K3 to tackle R1 following the muff, thus preventing him from reaching the ball. (See 2-3-5b & 6-2-4).

In (*), "I could see possible illegal personal contact [personal foul] depending on the severity of the contact on a defenseless player, but no KCI or holding." – Will McKoy, MHSAA

End