



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

PLAY SITUATIONS: PLAYERS IN BOUNDS AND OUT OF BOUNDS

Player In Bounds/Out of Bounds and Ball Out of Bounds

- A player is out of bounds if any body part is touching a sideline, end line, or anything, other than another player or a game official, that is on or beyond a sideline or end line.
- An out-of-bounds player who becomes airborne remains out of bounds until he establishes himself inbounds by touching the ground inbounds without simultaneously being out of bounds.
- An inbounds player is one who is not out of bounds.
- An inbounds player who becomes airborne remains in bounds until he becomes out of bounds.
- A ball not in player possession is out of bounds if it is touching anything that is out of bounds.
- A ball not in player possession is in bounds if it is not out of bounds.
- A ball in player possession is out of bounds if the ball or the player touches anything that is out of bounds other than a game official or another player.
- An originally eligible pass receiver loses his eligibility when he goes out of bounds, either on his own or due to contact with an opponent.

Incomplete Pass

1. End A88 goes out of bounds before touching a legal forward pass. When he touches the ball, A88 (a) is touching the ground on or outside the sideline; (b) has become airborne by leaping from out of bounds. **RULING:** Incomplete pass in both (a)

and (b). The ball is out of bounds when it touches A88 in both cases since A88 is out of bounds. With regard to A88 touching the ball, the situation is the same in both cases. Note that this is *not* a foul for illegal touching, since when A88 touches the ball it becomes out of bounds and thus the pass is incomplete.

Pass Interference or Not?

2. End A88 goes out of bounds. As he leaps from out of bounds in an attempt to catch a pass, defender B44 jumps into A88 and knocks the ball to the ground. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. This is not defensive pass interference since A88 lost his eligibility when he went out of bounds.

Illegal Touching

3. End A88 goes out of bounds and returns inbounds before catching a legal forward pass. He went out of bounds (a) on his own; (b) because B44 pushed him out. **RULING:** (a) Foul for illegal touching. Loss of down at the previous spot. (b) Legal play and a completed pass.

Fumble out of Bounds

4. Ball carrier A22 fumbles the ball near the sideline. Defensive end B99 (a) is touching the sideline when he touches the ball; (b) touches the sideline before leaping and grabbing the ball while he is airborne. B99 then comes to the ground inbounds. **RULING:** (a) and (b) The ball becomes out of bounds when B99 touches it because he is out of bounds in both cases. Team A's ball at the yard line where B99 touches the ball (this is the out-of-bounds spot) or at the spot of the fumble if this is behind the out-of-bounds spot. To recover the fumble, B99 must establish inbounds before touching the ball.

Held Ball Out of Bounds?

5. Receiver A88 catches a pass near the sideline. Defender B44 steps on the sideline and then jumps toward A88 and while airborne tries to strip the ball, touching it in the process. A88 breaks free and carries the ball across Team B's goal line. **RULING:** Legal play, touchdown. B44 is out of bounds when he touches the ball since he jumped after touching the sideline without establishing himself inbounds. But the held ball is not dead when touched by another player who is out of bounds, so the ball remains alive in the possession of A88.

Complete or Incomplete Pass?

6. A86 is legally blocked out of bounds by B18 at Team B's two-yard line. A86, while attempting an immediate return to the field of play, leaps from out of bounds and is airborne as he receives A16's legal forward pass. He lands in Team B's end zone with the ball in his grasp. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. A86 did not establish in bounds before touching the pass, and hence he was still out of bounds.

Free Kick Out of Bounds

7. On a kickoff, deep receiver B33 is straddling or standing with one foot on the sideline. The ball is untouched by any other player when B33 reaches out and touches it. The ball does not cross the sideline. **RULING:** Team A foul, free kick out of bounds. The ball becomes out of bounds when it touches B33 who is out of bounds.

Free Kick Out of Bounds

8. On a kickoff, deep receiver B22 steps on the sideline and then leaps to get the bouncing football as it heads toward the sideline. While airborne at the B-20, B22 bats the ball backward and out of bounds at the B-15. **RULING:** Team A foul, free kick out of bounds at the B-20. The ball becomes out of bounds when B22 touches it since he is out of bounds by having gone airborne from out of bounds.

Free Kick Out of Bounds?

9. On a kickoff B44 is in bounds near the sideline at the B-15. B44 jumps high into the air, grabs the bouncing ball, and first touches the ground out of bounds after crossing the sideline at the B-15. **RULING:** Not a free kick out of bounds. B44 touches the ball in bounds and then carries it out of bounds. Team B's ball at the B-15.

Forced Out of Bounds

10. Defender B21 blocks receiver A33 causing him to go out of bounds. A33 then goes airborne to try to catch the pass. He grasps it while airborne and then lands in bounds with the ball in his grasp. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. Even though A33 was blocked out of bounds, he still cannot complete the catch without first establishing in bounds. He is out of bounds when he touches the ball, making the pass incomplete. This is the same as if A33 were standing out of bounds when he touched the ball.

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