

21. USE OF BEAN BAGS

21.1 - General principles

1. All officials shall carry at least two bean bags to use to mark spots other than spots of fouls.
2. Never throw a bean bag overarm. If possible, run to the approximate yard line level with the spot and *drop* it. If this is not possible, toss it underarm.
3. Note the yard line whenever possible.
4. If the bean bag falls on the wrong spot, move it to the correct spot. Move the bean bag with authority – don't try to nudge it with your foot in the hope that no one will notice.

21.2 - Marking spots

1. The Coverer (and no other) shall use a bean bag to mark:
 - (a) the end of a scrimmage kick in bounds. This may be the postscrimmage kick enforcement spot.
 - (b) the spot where possession was lost on a fumble. This is the end of the related run and may be the succeeding spot if the ball goes out of bounds, or the basic spot for fouls occurring during the run or while the ball is loose.
 - (c) the spot where a backward pass is thrown, but only when the pass goes to ground and there is a risk that it may go out of bounds (or no player attempts to recover it).[§]
 - (d) the spot where a backward pass or handoff occurs beyond the neutral zone or when there is no neutral zone. This is the end of the related run and the basic spot for fouls occurring during the run.
 - (e) the spot where an eligible pass receiver goes out of bounds voluntarily. Dropping your hat is an alternative to using a bean bag in this case. This is an indication that a foul will occur should they touch a forward pass in bounds before it has touched an opponent or an official.
 - (f) the spot where a Team A player goes out of bounds during a free or scrimmage kick voluntarily. Dropping your hat is an alternative to using a bean bag in this case. This is an indication that a foul will occur if they return in bounds. (If the player comes back in bounds immediately after going out of bounds a bean bag is unnecessary and you need only drop your flag to mark the spot of the foul.)
 - (g) all spots where a Team A player illegally touches a free or scrimmage kick. These are the spots where Team B may elect to take the ball as the result of the violation. Multiple spots may need more than one bean bag, or use your bean bag to mark the most advantageous (to Team B) of these spots.
 - (h) the spot where a player catches or recovers an opponent's kick, pass or fumble inside or near their 5-yard line when the momentum exception rule may apply. This is the dead-ball spot if the player's momentum carried them into the end zone and the ball subsequently becomes dead in the end zone in their team's possession.
 - (i) the spot of forward progress when the ball carrier (including a sacked quarterback) is driven back (but not routinely – only if there is a problem forming in the pile and you need to leave the forward progress spot to deal with it). This is the dead-ball spot.
 - (j) the spot where a potentially illegal forward pass is thrown.[§]
 - (k) the dead-ball spot if you have to leave the spot to recover the ball or to observe action. This should be a rare occurrence - do not do it routinely. This may include the spot of recovery of a kick by Team A if the recovering player attempts to advance the ball.
2. Unless the spot is also one of the spots listed above, bean bags should *not* be used to mark:
 - (a) the spot where an interception is made;
 - (b) the spot where a free kick ends – give the start the clock signal [S2] if appropriate;
 - (c) the spot where a fumble is recovered;
 - (d) the spot where a kick or pass hits the ground;
 - (e) the spot where a kick is muffed by a Team B player – use the ball touched signal [S11] instead;
 - (f) the spot of a muff in the backfield;
 - (g) the spot of a backward pass in the backfield unless it appears the loose ball may go out of bounds.

None of these can be possible enforcement spots.