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To: Big East Coaches, Officials, and Technical Advisors

Subject: Muddle-Huddle or Swinging Gate Formation on PATs and Field Goals

**Philosophy of Rule 1-4-2-b**

The present rule was adopted in 1985 so that kick coverage teams might have faster and more agile players on the line of scrimmage. The Coaches and Rules Committee agreed that it will not be used to create various eligible pass receivers.

The “muddle-huddle” or “swinging gate” formations, used primarily on PATs and Field goals by half of the Big East Conference teams, carries with it certain formation and player eligibility restrictions of which teams should be aware.

First, teams which use the muddle-huddle must line up in a scrimmage kick formation, which is defined as:

“At least one player seven yards or more behind the neutral zone, no player in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap between the snapper’s legs, and it is obvious that a kick may be attempted”

It is important to note that teams who line up in a scrimmage kick formation are exempted from the rule which requires at least five offensive players on the line of scrimmage numbered 50 through 79. However, such an exemption may limit a team’s flexibility when it shifts from the muddle-huddle or swinging gate back to the area where the center, kicker, and holder are positioned.

For example, teams that have less than 5 players on the line of scrimmage numbered 50 through 79 during these formations must be aware of the restrictions on a player's eligibility. Such restrictions begin when:

**“The snapper assumes his position and touches or simulates (hand(s) at or below his knees) touching the ball.”**

**Once the snapper does this**, the ineligible receiver(s) (interior linemen) is identified by his initial position as an exception to the 50-79 mandatory numbering. It is important to note that teams who already have five players on the LOS numbered 50-79 do not have to be concerned with numbering exceptions.

Once a player is designated as an exception to the rule, the player remains an ineligible receiver until the down is over, a timeout is charged to a team by the referee, or a period ends. Consequently, if a team shifts the “ineligible” player to an eligible position, a foul for illegal formation occurs at the snap.

Some important points to remember about the rule:

1. If a team has five players on the LOS numbered 50-79, it need not concern itself with exceptions to the numbering rule. It need only concern itself with normal shift requirements.
2. If a team has less than 5 players on the LOS numbered 50-79, simply lining up for the PAT and kicking the ball, without shifting from the muddle-huddle, is legal. The team may also run or pass the ball as long the receivers are in eligible positions with eligible numbers.

Attached are examples of legal and illegal shifts from muddle-huddle/swinging gate formations to “normal” PAT and FG formations.

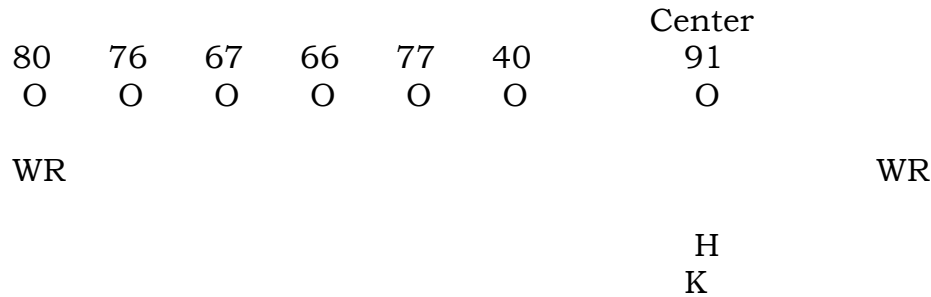
There are many variations to the 3 examples on the following pages so please feel free to call me with any questions. My thanks to John Adams for his assistance with this memorandum.

cc: John R. Adams, Secretary-Rules Editor  
Nick Carparelli, Associate Commissioner for Football

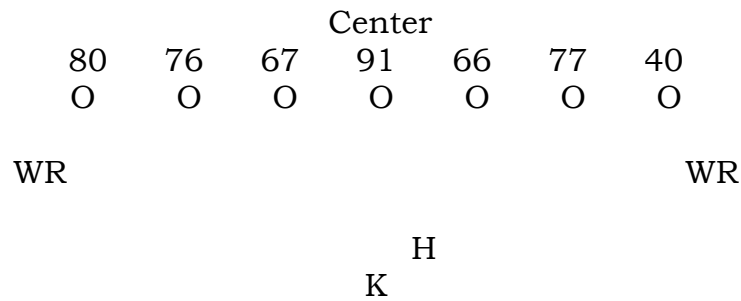
**Example 1**

**Illegal Formation**

**Muddle-Huddle**



**Shifts To:**

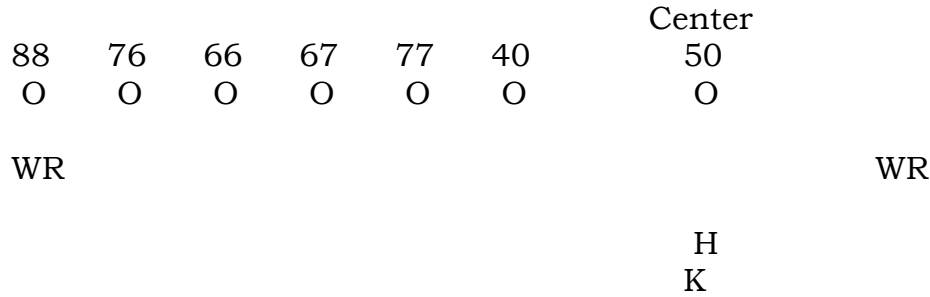


40 is initially an exception to the numbering rule and must remain ineligible. When 40 shifts to an End position, he has moved from an ineligible to eligible position and commits a foul (illegal formation) at the snap.

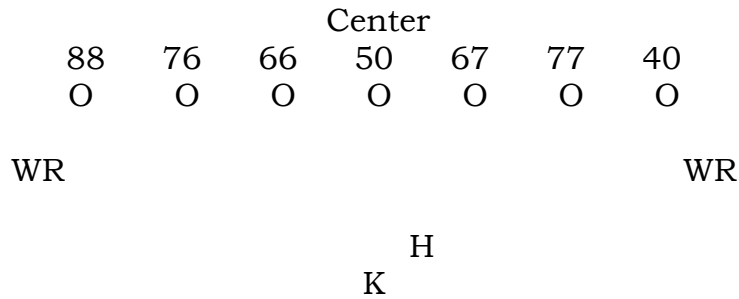
**Example 2**

**Legal Formation**

**Muddle-Huddle**



**Shifts To:**

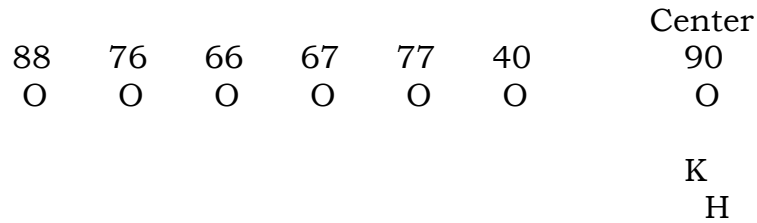


Since the team has 5 players on the LOS to begin with (in the muddle-huddle formation), 40 is not an exception to the mandatory numbering rule and can move to an eligible position (legal formation) and legally receive a pass on a broken play.

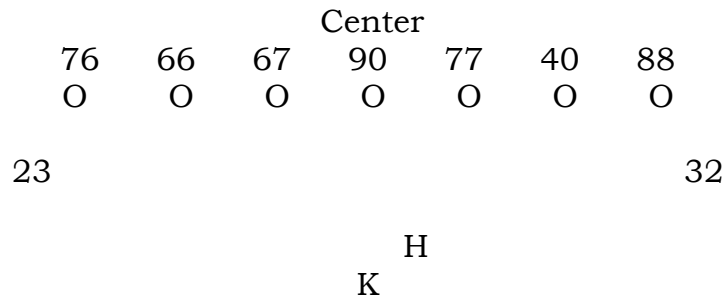
**Example 3**

**Legal Formation**

**Muddle-Huddle**



**Shifts To:**



40 is initially an exception to the numbering since there are not 5 players on the line of scrimmage numbered 50-79 when the team is in the muddle-huddle formation. When 40 shifts from the muddle-huddle to the right tackle position he has remained in an ineligible position and commits **no** infraction at the snap.