

GHSA Catch Definition

In a state as large as Georgia getting consistency in on-field rulings is as difficult as it is important. Earlier this year a primer on free blocking zone limitations in the spread/shotgun formation was published. Our officials should know that the five states surrounding us have subtle differences in what they allow as opposed to the GHSA. That is because the NFHS stops short of specific limitations other than stating when the zone breaks down. The NFHS makes no ruling whatsoever on the timing required for many varied blocking schemes to be accomplished nor timing effects of which type of snap is used.

The NFHS definition of a catch is as equally non-committal after the receiver returns to the ground other than “ while maintaining possession of the ball “. There is no NFHS delineation of how long he must maintain possession and whether continued momentum is part of the act of catching. In fact, strict interpretation would allow that if he has possessed the ball as an airborne receiver and then comes to the ground inbounds he has fulfilled the NFHS definition at that instant. But all of us know that the ground can cause an incomplete pass. By being non-committal- actually omitting areas of speculation- the NFHS has allowed individual states to interpret action differently.

All aspects of Rules 2-4-1,2,3 are enforced in the GHSA. In addition, **surviving the ground, football moves after coming to the ground on one or both feet inbounds and what the covering official should expect at the conclusion of action** are now defined.

SURVIVING THE GROUND:

1. The receiver must gain possession and return to the ground inbounds with one or both feet.
2. If the receiver returns to the ground **landing on or falling** on any body part other than one or both feet he must survive the associated momentum slide and associated defensive action. The momentum slide on **slick or wet** artificial turf may be several yards. Although quite rare, **possession of the ball must be maintained thru** this slide while not allowing the ball to become loose on the ground.
3. It is possible for a receiver to come to ground, bobble the ball while on

the ground but the ball never touch the ground. The receiver will then be able to accomplish what the covering official expects below.

FOOTBALL APPROPRIATE ACTION AND MOVES:

1. After coming down with on one or both feet inbounds the receiver must begin to turn up field, begin evasive action to avoid contact or change direction all the while maintaining possession. Failure to do so or if the official has doubts the pass is **incomplete**.

WHAT THE COVERING OFFICIAL SHOULD EXPECT AT THE CONCLUSION OF ACTION OR MOMENTUM:

1. The receiver should be able to hand or toss the football to the covering official or maintain possession until a covering official requests the ball. It is possible a receiver may continue to lay on the ground for a period of time then rise and either lay the ball down or hand/toss to an official.

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