Referee Training
Flag Guarding: Test Your Knowledge

Pick6Sports.com
What is Flag Guarding?

Pick 6 Sports defines it as:

“An act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, or by blocking access to the ball carrier’s flags with a hand or arm.”
When You See It

1. Throw your flag at spot of foul
2. Blow the play dead immediately
3. Turn to sidelines and communicate Flag Guarding penalty - Use hand signal and confident voice.

Penalty: 10 yards from spot of foul and loss of down
Scenario #1:
• The Seahawks have 3<sup>rd</sup> down with 6 yards to go to get a 1<sup>st</sup> down
• Marshawn Lynch, Jr. runs for 5 yards and then grabs his own flag and commits a Flag Guarding penalty

What down is it on the next play?
Where does the ball get marked?
Answer #1

• On the play, the Seahawks did not pick up the 1\textsuperscript{st} down prior to the penalty being picked up. So it would be 4\textsuperscript{th} down.

• The ball ends up back 5 yards behind the point where the previous play was snapped as it was a 5 yard run but then a 10 yard penalty.

• As a result, the Seahawks would have a 4\textsuperscript{th} down and 11 to go on the next play.
Scenario #2:

• The Seahawks have 4th down with 6 yards to go to get a 1st down
• Marshawn Lynch, Jr. runs for 5 yards and then grabs his own flag and commits a Flag Guarding penalty

What down is it on the next play?
Where does the ball get marked?
On the play, the Seahawks did not pick up the 1<sup>st</sup> down prior to the penalty. Since it was 4<sup>th</sup> down, it would be a turnover on downs. The other team gets the ball.

Because it is a turnover, the other team starts on their own 5 yard line (the penalty yardage is not assessed).  
- Penalty yardage can be added on a turnover in the event of unnecessary roughness or unsportsmanlike conduct by the offense.  
- The only exception to the 5 yard line start is an interception (the ball would be marked where the flag is pulled).
Scenario #3:
- The Seahawks have 3rd down with 6 yards to go to get a 1st down
- Marshawn Lynch, Jr. runs for 10 yards and then grabs his own flag and commits a Flag Guarding penalty

What down is it on the next play? Where does the ball get marked?
Answer #3

• On the play, the Seahawks picked up the 1st down prior to the penalty being committed. So it would be 1st down.
  – In a scenario where a team picks up the 1st down prior to the penalty they get to keep the 1st down and but take the yardage loss.

• The ball ends up back at the same point where the previous play was snapped as it was a 10 yard run but then a 10 yard penalty.

• As a result, the Seahawks would have a 1st down and goal on the next play.
  – Please note they can not pick up another 1st down even though they are not past mid-field. Also, the No Running Zone does not apply near mid-field because they are not trying for a 1st down.
What happens when a team makes a first down **before** an offensive penalty on a play?

- Any time a ball carrier passes the 1st Down marker without or prior to a penalty, their team is awarded a new set of downs.
- Remember, in these situations, the offense can’t get another first down and has to drive more than half the length of the field to score a touchdown.
- This is another reason why the refs need to stop the play when they call the foul.
Some Scenarios

• Imagine it’s 4th down and the ball carrier runs for 20 yards to get the first down *then* commits a foul. If we ignore the 1st down previously on the play, the ball would turn over on downs despite the kid’s great run. So, the offense keeps the ball, 1st down starting 10 yards from the spot of the foul.

• Imagine on 3rd down from their own 5 yard line, the ball carrier runs 40 yards - almost the entire length of the field - and commits a foul at the opposing team’s 5 yard line. Due to the penalty, they would get the ball on the opposing team’s 15 yard line. If we ignored the 1st down earned, it would be 4th down and goal with no chance to get a 1st down.
Now it’s Your Turn
Your Turn #1

Scenario:
- It is 3rd and goal. The Seahawks are on offense against the Packers. The Seahawks have the ball about midway between the 1st down line and the end zone.
- A receiver catches the ball on the 5 yard line, makes an awkward looking spin move to avoid the defender, then scores.

What is the call?
What down is it on the next play?
Where does the ball get marked?
Your Turn #2

Scenario:
• Same situation as #1: It is 3rd and goal. The Seahawks have the ball about midway between the 1st down line and the end zone.
• A receiver catches the ball on the 5 yard line running across the field, but stiff arms the defender, then scores.

What is the call?
What down is it on the next play?
Where does the ball get marked?
Your Turn #3

Scenario:

• Similar situation, but it is 4th and goal. The Seahawks have the ball about midway between the 1st down line and the end zone.
• A receiver catches the ball on the 5 yard line running across the field, stiff arms the defender, then scores.

What is the call?
What down is it on the next play?
Where does the ball get marked?
Think You Know?

- Email your answers to these scenarios to training@Pick6Sports.com.

- Remember to include your name (even it is part of your email address) so you can receive credit for this part of your training.
Congratulations
You have completed your training on: Flag Guarding

Pick6Sports.com