



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

ILLEGAL SHIFT: POSSIBLE FALSE START

The definition of a shift has remained unchanged for many years. A shift occurs when two or more Team A players change their position or stance after the ball is ready for play before the snap. The shift ends when all players stop and remain motionless for one full second.

This definition allows us to distinguish two kinds of illegal shift. One kind is when the offensive team is in the midst of a shift when the ball is made ready for play and never comes to a one-second stop before the snap. The other is when the shift starts *after* the ball is ready for play—that is, sometime after the ball is ready for play Team A satisfies the one-second rule and then executes a shift that is still continuing at the snap.

Starting in 2011, it is a false start if the offensive team is shifting when the ball is made ready for play and has not stopped for a full second before the ball is snapped. This is the first of the two types of illegal shift given above. As with other kinds of false starts, the officials should shut the play down, in this case as soon as the ball is snapped. Note that this action is not a foul until the snap, since the offensive team may at any time before the snap come to a full stop for a second.

Here are some examples.

PLAY SITUATIONS

1. At the time the ball is made ready for play backs A22 and A33 are moving. A22 then comes to a stop and A33 continues in motion as the ball is snapped. **RULING:** False start. Team A players were not all stopped for a full second before the snap at any time after the ball was made ready for play. Officials should stop the action, and Team A is penalized five yards for a dead-ball foul.

2. Team A is in a no-huddle offense and is moving to the line when the ball is made ready for play. Although some players settle into their positions and stop, at least one player never stops and is still moving when the ball is snapped. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul—false start, since Team A never satisfied the one-second rule before the snap. Officials should shut the play down and penalize Team A five yards.

3. After the ball is made ready for play, all eleven Team A players come to a complete stop for a full second. Then back A22 goes laterally in motion as A33 changes from a hands-on-knees stance into a three-point stance. A22 is still moving when the ball is snapped. **RULING:** Live-ball illegal shift. The play continues. When the ball is dead the officials stop the clock to administer the penalty.

LINEMEN: OK TO HAVE INTERLOCKING LEGS

For a number of years Rule 7-1-3-b-2 has allowed only the offensive linemen next to the snapper to “lock legs” with the snapper. Every other Team A lineman had to have both feet outside the outside foot of the lineman to his inside. This was a foul that was seldom seen or called, and in 2011 the rules committee voted to delete the rule. **Starting this year, offensive linemen are allowed to lock legs.**

PLAY SITUATION

1. Team A lines up for a scrimmage play with seven men on the line of scrimmage. Right guard A66 has his left foot inside the right foot of the snapper, and right tackle A77 has his left foot inside A66’s right foot. **RULING:** The formation is legal. In previous years it was legal for the guard to lock legs with the snapper, but A77 could not lock legs with A66. As of 2011 this is now legal.