# USE OF BEAN BAG

## **GENERAL BEAN BAG MECHANICS**

All officials are to carry at least one bean bag (blue or white) as a part of their uniform equipment. The crew will use the same color bean bag at all levels.

The primary purpose of the bean bag is to mark an important spot during action while the ball is live. There are several critical spots that should be marked by a bean bag:

* The spot of first touching of any kick
* The spot of the end of a scrimmage kick
* The spot of a fumble beyond the line of scrimmage
* Forward progress when a play ends out of bounds or an inadvertent whistle.

An official does not need to throw the bean bag a great distance to mark an exact spot; instead, they may drop the bean bag on the proper yard line, marking the most critical element of that spot. After the play, if the spot is needed for penalty enforcement for a foul that occurs while the ball is loose, the official can subsequently move the bean bag to the exact spot of the fumble or end of the kick.

It is possible that an official would need to mark both the end of the kick and a subsequent fumble on the same play. For this reason, the LINE JUDGE and HEAD LINESMAN will carry two bean bags in 4-official mechanics, and the HEAD LINESMAN and BACK JUDGE will utilize two bean bags in 5-official mechanics. Bean bags should be different colors if an official is using more than one bean bag.

It is also a common practice to use the bean bag in an emergency where the play and players go well out of bounds, and there is no supporting official available to observe that action. In this unique situation, the covering official will drop the bean bag at the sideline to mark the out-of-bounds progress spot of a runner or receiver as they immediately move out of bounds to observe the players.

Another rare and acceptable use of a bean bag is to mark forward progress in the event of an inadvertent whistle. When an inadvertent whistle occurs, players most often continue their action, and we need to continue to officiate, observe, and show presence to stop all unnecessary action. The use of a bean bag to mark forward progress allows us to mark the result of the play and continue to with the action.

It is also an acceptable practice for the HEAD LINESMAN to carry two bean bags so that they can provide the down box operator with a bean bag for goal-to-go situations when the line-to-gain equipment has been removed. It is also a common practice for the HEAD LINESMAN to drop the bean bag at the new spot if the down box operator has not arrived before the snap. This can happen with hurry-up offenses, on long plays, and near the end of the half or the game.

Officials are reminded that NO BEAN BAG IS NECESSARY when a bad snap occurs, a snap is fumbled, or there is a fumble behind the line of scrimmage. In these cases, should a foul occur, the enforcement spot for foul occurring while the ball is loose behind the line of scrimmage is always the previous spot. It is also improper for a bean bag to be thrown following an interception as there is no foul enforcement from the spot of a turnover.