

The beauty of APBA Football is the coach sees the game play out through mental imagery or as I refer to it “minds-eye”. Regarding fumbles, it is cut and dry during a running or passing play but it can get fuzzy during the kicking game. Unless you are using the Rare Play feature of the Master Game booklet, you really don’t have a visual picture of how the fumble occurred. Did the holder or punter pull the ball back to run himself or was it an aborted play? An aborted play is a play from scrimmage during which there is neither a pass nor a kick, which falls into one of the following categories:

- The ball is clearly centered improperly, meaning that the ball does not reach the intended receiver of the snap within the frame of his body or arm-span.
- The intended ball-handler fumbles the snap from center.
- A punter has received the snap from the center correctly, but in the process to punt the ball, the ball is dropped (unforced fumble).

So, without a clear picture, how do you score or record the play? I want to introduce a simple innovation that I use to provide visual clarity to make scoring easy. It only requires remembering a couple simple rules and does NOT require any additional dice rolls.

If you are using Howard Ahlskog’s “Team Defense Forced Fumble” or “Fumble Frequency Number (FFN)” innovations, determine if a fumble occurred and player who recovered the fumble prior to implementing scoring innovation.

Field Goals & Punts

Whenever F8 or F9 occurs during a field goal attempt or F6 on a punt, pay close attention to the result on the Identification Chart: Fumbles, Blocked Kicks & Interceptions.

Field Goals (F8 or F9)

Play Result of -6o8/-7o8: ***Treat this as an aborted play were the holder fumbled (botched) the perfect long snap.*** Charge a rush for 0 yards to the player who receives or intended to receive the snap from center. If the player charged with the rush (holder) recovers the loose ball and advances beyond the line of scrimmage, credit any advance as rushing yardage. A FR-0 code indicates the player is downed. Not coded with FR- indicates the ball is declared dead. There are a total of 12 results from columns 8 and 9 for this scenario.

Example: Fourth-and-10 at opponents 30-yard line. The holder could not handle a perfect snap from the center (botched snap). Then:

-6o8. Holder recovers botched the snap at the opponent’s 36-yard line and is coded with FR-R. Roll dice and refer to the “Fumble return & Blk Kick return” column where the

play result indicates a 17-yard gain. Scoring: holder gets one rush for 11 yards, a fumble, own recovery, and team is credited with a first down rushing. **NOTE: If the player charged with the rush recovers the loose ball and advances beyond the line of scrimmage, credit any advance as rushing yards. Yardage gained up to the line of scrimmage is used to reduce the negative fumble yardage of the player who fumbled.**

-7o8. Holder recovers botched snap at the opponent's 37-yard line and is coded with FR-0. Scoring: holder gets one rush for no yards, a fumble, and minus 7 yards as fumble yardage. Holder gets own recovery. Turnover on downs.

Play Results of negative 11 or more yards: ***Treat this as an aborted play that indicates a bad snap from center.*** Score the play as an aborted play, charge the center with a fumble and any yards lost as fumble yardage. On any other aborted play, the player charged with the rush is also charged with a fumble and any yards lost as fumble yardage. There are a total of 20 results from columns 8 and 9 for this scenario.

Example: Fourth-and-10 at opponents 30-yard line. The ball is clearly centered improperly (bad snap) by the long snapper. Then:

-30o9. O9 recovers at own 40-yard line and is downed (FR-0) or declared dead (no coding). Scoring: long snapper gets a fumble and minus 30 as fumble yards. Punter gets rush for no yards. O9 gets own recovery. Turnover on downs.

-22d8. D8 recovers at kicking team's (opponents) 48-yard line and is downed (FR-0). Scoring: long snapper gets a fumble and minus 22 as fumble yards. Punter gets rush for no yards. D8 gets recovery for no gain. This is classified as "fumble lost".

Treat all other play results as an actual fumble (non-aborted play).

Punts (F6)

Play Results of -6o11/-12o11: ***Treat this as an aborted play were the punter has received the snap from the center correctly, but in the process to punt the ball, the ball is dropped (unforced fumble).*** There are a total of 2 play results from column 6 for this scenario.

Example: Fourth-and-10 at own 40-yard line. The punter is charged with an unforced fumble. Then:

-6o11. Punter recovers at the 34-yard line and is coded FR-R. Roll dice and refer to the "Fumble return & Blk Kick return" column where the play result indicates no gain. Scoring: Punter gets one rush for no yards, a fumble, and punter gets fumble recovery and minus 6 yards as fumble yardage. Turnover on downs.

-12011. Punter recovers at the 28-yard line and is coded FR-0. Scoring: Punter gets one rush for no yards, a fumble, and own recovery. Turnover on downs.

All play results that have a loss greater than 15-yards, not including 6o11/-12o11, (-39d6, -19ob, -29d9, -22d11, etc) **indicates the punter intended to receive the snap, but it is clearly centered improperly (bad snap)**. There are a total of 13 play results that fit this criteria.

Example: Fourth-and-10 at own 40-yard line. The long snap sails over the punter's head. Then:

-39d6. D6 recovers at the 1 and is coded FR-R. Roll dice and refer to the "Fumble return & Blk Kick return" column where the play result indicates minus one-yard. Scoring: center gets a fumble and minus 39 as fumble yardage. Punter gets one rush for no yards. D6 gets recovery and minus one yard in return yardage. This is considered "fumble lost" and the team that recovered the fumble would have first and goal from the 2-yard line.

-19ob. The ball goes out of bounds at the 21-yard line. Note that there must be "recovery" for every fumble charged except for fumbles that go out of bounds. Scoring: center gets a fumble and minus 19 as fumble yardage. Punter gets one rush for no yards. There is a turnover on downs and the opposing team takes over at their opponent's 21-yard line.

-29d9. D9 recovers at the 11 and is not coded with a FR-rating. Scoring: center gets a fumble and minus 29 as fumble yardage. Punter gets one rush for no yards. D9 recovers and is declared dead for no gain. This is classified as "fumble lost".

Treat all other play results as an actual fumble (non-aborted play).

Extra Point

On July 29, 2023, I wrote the below post to address fumbles occurring during extra point attempts.

I'm only 55 games into my 1998 NFL replay and I've already had seven fumbled extra point attempts with one impacting the outcome of a game. Mr. Dave Urban, an author on this site and someone I greatly respect, informed me of a workaround he implemented after conducting extensive research. He informed me this problem began with the 2014 card set, where play result (PR) 16 on the place kicker's card which was good for an extra point (XP) attempt was changed to either a 33 or 34. Dave's research yielded that fumbled snaps were solely based on field goal attempts and not extra points. Moving forward, I will adhere to his recommendation of using PR 13 whenever a fumble occurs during an extra point and use F8 and F9 during field goal attempts.

If your uncomfortable automatically using PR 13 and want the option for a fumble, than I recommend using an old Mark Zarb trick, re-roll and use result of the roll. If it's a repeat roll, than the fumble occurred.