

NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE

2007 Major Rules Changes (Approved April 12, 2007)

Rule 3-1-1

The coin toss begins when the field captains leave the nine-yard marks and ends when the captains return to the nine-yard marks.

Rationale: This change clarifies when the coin toss begins and ends and avoids unnecessary confrontations between teams.

Rule 3-2-2-h

Following television timeouts, the ready for play period will, with the teams on the field, be 15 seconds. *Exception:* Free kicks.

Rationale: This change will eliminate some dead time during televised games and encourage teams to be on the field ready for play. The committee estimates about three minutes of time savings.

Rule 3-2-2-i.

This proposal alters the inadvertent whistle rule to read: "(i). If an inadvertent whistle occurs on a play and the down is replayed under the provisions of Rule 4-1-2-b, then the time and status of the game clock and play clock shall be reset to their position prior to the play in which the inadvertent whistle occurs. If necessary, instant replay can be consulted to determine the exact time and status of the game clock and the play clock."

Rationale: This allows an official to add lost clock time in the rare case where an inadvertent whistle is blown.

Rule 3-2-5

When the ball is free-kicked, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally touched in the field of play or crosses the goal line after being touched legally by Team B in its end zone and subsequently stopped when the ball is dead by rule.

Rationale: This reverts to the 2005 rule. The 2006 rule, which started the clock when the ball was kicked, created some difficult situations at the end of the half and game and the rule overall did not achieve its intended effect.

Rule 3-2-5-e

When Team B is awarded a first down, the game clock is stopped and starts on the snap.

Rationale: This reverts back to the 2005 rule. This rule change last year was a large part of changes that eliminated about 16 plays from the game and cut about 15 minutes of elapsed time off of the game. The committee believes the elimination of participation opportunities for student-athletes is too much and addressed the overall length of game issues in other ways.

Rule 3-3-7-a

A team timeout is 30 seconds plus the 25-second play clock interval. This provision will only apply to televised games. Conference television contracts will supersede this rule. (For example, if a team calls a timeout and a conference television agreement allows for a television timeout to be used, this timeout extends to a full media timeout. The television partners – through normal protocols – make the decision through their timeout coordinator when the ball should be whistled ready for play.)

Rationale: This change eliminates 30 seconds from team timeouts. The committee believes many timeouts are called to simply stop the clock (or when a team has formation, substitution or play clock problems). This reduction in time will save about three to six minutes, depending on how many timeouts are used during the game.

Rule 3-4-2-a (Possible Implementation in 2008)

Consuming more than 40 seconds to put the ball in play after declared ready for play is an illegal delay. When the play is completed, the 40 second clock will start. The administrative duties listed below would continue to use the 25 second play clock.

Exceptions (administrative duties):

- Free kick.
- Measurements
- Fumbles.
- Penalties.
- Touchbacks.
- Injury timeouts.
- Live ball out of bounds.
- Team B awarded a first down.
- Team timeouts.
- Try.

Rationale: This possible change is being raised now to alert conferences and teams to the change in how the ball will be marked ready for play. The AFCA is in strong support of this system of play clock management and believes it will bring more consistency to the pace of play. The rules committee has been asked by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel to collect information throughout this season to determine the effect of this possible change.

Rule 6-1-1

Unless relocated by penalty, the kicking team's restraining line on kickoffs shall be the 30-yard line.

Rationale: This change will create more kickoff returns and therefore create more action. This change will save about one minute of playing time and eliminate a play with no action (touchbacks).

Rule 6-1-2

Insertion following the second sentence in the rules regarding kickoffs:

“...between the inbounds lines. **The referee shall declare the ball ready for play when the kicker receives the ball from the official.** After the ball is ready ...”

Rationale: This change will eliminate some down time when the kicker receives the ball. When the kicker receives the ball, the kicker will have 25 seconds to kick. This will save about two minutes of elapsed time in the game.

Rule 6-2-1-Penalty

Penalty for a free kick out of bounds altered to be five yards from the previous spot or the receiving team awarded the ball 35 yards beyond Team A’s restraining line.

Rationale: This change is in relation to the kickoff spot being moved to the 30-yard line. The committee decided that the penalty for a kickoff out of bounds should remain at the 35-yard line (or 35 yards from the spot it was kicked). Teams also have the option of moving the kicking team back five yards and kicking again.

Rules 7-1-3, 7-1-4, 9-1-2, 9-3-3-a

Team A fouls added to administration of all kicks at the previous spot or succeeding spot.

Rationale: This change allows penalties to be assessed on the kicking team at the end of the run, if the receiving team chooses. This change is estimated to save about two minutes of elapsed time, depending on how many times this change occurs in a game.

Rule 9-3-5-b-3

Defensive players may not “be picked up by a teammate or **elevated, propelled or pushed.**”

Rationale: This change is intended to address blocks on extra points and field goals where linemen are pushed from behind by other players, creating a dangerous situation for the kicking team’s blocking linemen. This type of blocking scheme is becoming more prevalent and the committee believes it creates a significant safety risk.

Rule 12-3-1

Egregious fouls added to reviewable instant replays:

- Five or three downs, which must be corrected within that series of downs.
- Tackle or interference from bench that goes undetected on the field.
- Kick caught or muffed.

Rationale: These changes allow video replay to correct errors otherwise not allowed by rule, but obvious and correctable.

NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE

2007 Editorial Rules Changes (Approved April 12, 2007)

1-2-1-h

Alter this rule to read: “Advertising is prohibited on the field...*Note: If a commercial entity has purchased naming rights to the facility, that name is allowed to be painted on the field; however, the commercial logo is not allowed to be in the field of play.*”

Rationale: This wording confirms several recent interpretations in response to the growing number of stadiums named for companies. NCAA legal counsel has confirmed the committee’s distinction between the placement of the name of the company in conjunction with the stadium name and the company’s commercial logo.

1-2-4-e

Add sentence to read: “In stadiums where the team area extends to the spectator seating area, a pass through area should be made available for media to move from one end of the field to the other on both sides of the field.”

Rationale: In some stadiums, the team area extends to the seating area. This alteration will allow media personnel to pass through to the opposite end of the stadium.

1-2-7

Amended to read: “The official line-to-gain and down indicators **may** be operated approximately six feet outside the sideline opposite the press box...”

Rationale: This allows management some flexibility with regard to how close to the field the chains must be.

1-3-2-a

Change to read “**Game officials**” shall test...

Rationale: Clarity.

1-3-2-d

Change wording from “I-AA” to “**Championship Subdivision.**”

Rationale: Change to reflect NCAA’s new designations for football subdivisions.

1-3-2-g

Change wording to ...nearer “**a**” sideline...

Rationale: Clarity.

1-4-4-b

Change to read “**A helmet with a facemask and a secured four or six point chin strap.**”

Rationale: Clarity.

1-4-5-p

Change to read: “**interior**” **offensive lineman**; in last sentence

Rationale: This makes it clear that the only offensive lineman allowed to have a towel as an attachment must be interior lineman.

1-4-9-a

Delete “are prohibited” in second sentence and add “...writing-transmission machines and computers **may not be used by coaches or** for coaching purposes...”

Rationale: Clears up an otherwise unenforceable rule.

1-4-9-c

Add “**computers**” to prohibited items.

Rationale: This change reflects what is already in practice.

2-25-11

“The postscrimmage kick spot, as related to certain Team B fouls, is the spot where the kick ends. Team B retains the ball after penalty enforcement. Penalties for Team B fouls are enforced either from the postscrimmage kick spot or, if the foul is behind the postscrimmage kick spot, from the spot of the foul.”

Rationale: Rewords this rule for clarity.

2-32-1-b

Rewrite to read: “An unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes **any** opponent to retaliate by fighting ...”

Rationale: This makes it clear that this rule applies to all student-athletes and can apply to more than one opposing player.

3-2-5-a-2 and 3-3-2-a-19

Add: ...helmet comes “**completely**” off..

Rationale: There are some situations where a player will adjust the helmet after a play and this should not affect how the clock is started. This makes this point clear.

3-2-5-a-10

Add “**live**” ball in official’s possession.

Rationale: Clarity.

3-2-5-e

Rewrite to read: “When Team B is awarded a first down **and will next snap the ball, ..**”

Rationale: Clarity.

4-1-3-d

Add a reference to **8-3-2-d-5**.

Rationale: Clarity.

4-1-3-n

Add “**a live**” ball is in possession ...

Rationale: Clarity.

5-2-3

Add **10-2-2-e-6** to the exceptions to this rule.

Rationale: Needed adjustment to allow for management of other exceptions.

6-3-10-c

Add is “**an illegal kick and a live ball foul ...**”

Rationale: Clarity.

7-3-2-f-1

After “lands,” add: “**or touches a player, an official, or anything beyond the neutral zone in or out of bounds.**”

Rationale: Provides more guidance to officials when administering intentional grounding rules.

Delete 7-3-2-f-2

The previous editorial change now covers both situations.

Rationale: Elimination of unneeded wording.

8-3-3-c-2

Replace wording to read: “**If Team A commits a foul for which the penalty includes loss of down, the try is over, any score is canceled, and no yardage penalty is assessed on the succeeding kickoff.**”

Rationale: Clarity.

8-5-2

Add “**and try**” to the exception after extra-period.

Rationale: Clarity.

9-3-4-e

Add “**other than the passer**” after “eligible receiver” in the penalty.

Rationale: Clarity.

9-4-1-c

Add reference to **Rule 2-2-3-a**.

Rationale: Clarity.

10-1-4

Rewrite Exception 4 to read: “**Rules 8-3-4-c and 3-1-3-g-3 (during a try or extra period after Team B possession).**”

Rationale: Clarity.

10-2-2-e-3

Remove “**enforcement**” and replace with The “**postscrimmage kick spot.**”

Rationale: Wording is clearer for this specific rule.

10-2-2-e-3-a

Alter wording to read: “During scrimmage kick plays other than a try or a **successful field goal**, and during extra periods.”

Rationale: Clarity.

10-2-2-e-7

Alter wording to read: “For live ball fouls **by Team A** occurring between...”

Rationale: This change makes it clear that this example is only in effect for Team A fouls.

10-2-2-g-4

Alter to read: “**Penalties for live ball fouls during field goal plays are administered by rule. To accept points on a successful field goal, Team A must decline penalties for Team B live-ball fouls. By accepting the penalty for a Team B live-ball foul, Team A elects to cancel the score and have the penalty enforced at the previous spot. Penalties for live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls and those for dead-ball fouls after a field goal down are enforced at the succeeding spot. (AR 10-2-2-XXIV)**”

Rationale: This new wording clearly shows what options the kicking team has after a successful field goal.

12-2

Change typeset to be consistent with other section headings.

Rationale: Typographical error.

12-2-g

Change “Exception” to “**Note.**”

Rationale: Correction.

12-3-2-b

Add “originally” in front of ineligible receiver.

Rationale: Clarity.

12-5-1-a

Add in the second sentence: “legally” put in play...

Rationale: Clarity.

12-5-1-b-3

Add “or for that extra period” at the end of the sentence.

Rationale: Consistency with other rules.

12-5-1-b-5

Add “or for that extra period” after that half of game at the end of the first sentence.

Rationale: Consistency with other rules.

12-5-1-b-6

Add “or for that extra period” at end of sentence.

Rationale: Consistency with other rules.

Interpretations

Add on FI-44 under **Approved Ruling 7-3-6:**

- XI. Airborne receiver A85 possesses the ball and in the process of going to the ground, first contacts the ground with his left foot as he falls to the ground inbounds. Immediately upon hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and touches the ground. Ruling: Incomplete pass. An airborne receiver must maintain control of the ball if going to the ground in the process of completing a catch.**
- XII. Airborne receiver A85 possesses the ball and in the process of coming to the ground, first contacts the ground with his left foot as he falls to the**

ground inbounds. Immediately upon hitting the ground, the ball comes loose but never touches the ground prior to him regaining control.

Ruling: Catch. If the receiver is inbounds and is going to the ground and loses control, as long as the player remains inbounds and the ball never touches the ground, it is a completed pass.

- XIII. Airborne receiver A85 possesses the ball and in the process of coming to the ground, first contacts the ground with his left foot inbounds as he falls to the ground out of bounds. Immediately upon hitting the ground out of bounds, the ball pops loose, and A85 catches it before it hits the ground. Ruling: Incomplete pass regardless of whether or not the ball hits the ground because the receiver is out of bounds when the ball is possessed.**
- XIV. Receiver A85 stretches out at the B2 and possesses the ball but is going to the ground on his own as he is attempting to complete the catch. As A85 falls to the ground in the end zone, the ball immediately comes loose and falls to the ground. Ruling: Incomplete pass. Any receiver going to the ground on his own in the process of making a catch must maintain control of the ball when he hits the ground.**
- XV. Receiver A85 is airborne in the end zone and possesses a pass but while airborne is hit by a defender which causes A85 to fall to the ground. Immediately upon hitting the ground, the ball comes loose. Ruling: Incomplete pass. An airborne receiver contacted prior to completing all the requirements of a catch must still maintain control of the ball after hitting the ground.**

Rationale: Most officials use these guidelines when determining whether or not a catch was made. Clarifying these items and including them in the rules book as interpretations will assist with the consistency of the application of the rules regarding whether or not a catch is made.

12-6-1-d-2

Add “on the field” so the announcement read will be: “After review, the ruling on the field stands.”

Rationale: Better wording for officials when making announcements of replay decisions.