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# Part II:

## Interpretations

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A football rule interpretation, or approved ruling (A.R.), is an official decision on a given statement of facts. It serves to illustrate the spirit and application of the rule.

Any approved rulings that have been altered significantly are shaded for ease of reference. All new approved rulings are listed in the front of this section and are shaded.

STEVE SHAW, Secretary-Rules Editor

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# List of New and Modified Approved Rulings

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## NEW APPROVED RULINGS

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# RULE 1

## The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

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### Section 2. The Field

#### Dimensions and Markings—ARTICLE 1

##### Approved Ruling 1-2-1

- I. A commercial entity or individual has purchased naming rights to the stadium, and a separate corporate entity has purchased naming rights to the field. **RULING:** If both corporate entities are to be displayed on the field, then each of the corporate entity's name/company-specific font or logo may utilize separately one of the four available flanking locations, for a total of two locations.

### Section 3. The Ball

#### Administration and Enforcement—ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 1-3-2

- I. On fourth down, kicker A1 enters the field with an approved game ball and asks the referee to substitute it for the ball used during the previous down. **RULING:** Substitution of the ball is not permitted.

### Section 4. Players and Playing Equipment

#### Players' Numbering—ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 1-4-2

- I. The Team A player who started the game wearing jersey number 77 enters the game wearing number 88. **RULING:** The player must report to the Referee who, without stopping the game or play clock, uses his microphone to announce the change and the relevant flank official informs the opposing head coach. If A88 fails to report it is a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct.

#### Specifications: Mandatory Equipment—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 1-4-4

- I. A player or players of a team wear tights that cover their legs. **RULING:** Legal. For those players that wear tights, they must be of the same design and color.

#### Jersey Design, Color and Numerals—ARTICLE 5

##### Approved Ruling 1-4-5

- I. The home team is wearing red jerseys with orange numerals. In the judgment of the officials, the numerals and the body of the jersey do not contrast enough to make the numbers readily visible. The referee asks the home team head coach to change to a legal jersey. The head coach tells the referee that his team will not change into different jerseys. **RULING:** After the ball is marked ready for play for the opening kickoff, the referee charges the home team with a timeout for illegal jerseys. In addition, there will be a 15-yard penalty at the succeeding spot following the kickoff starting each half. If the kickoff is returned for a touchdown, the penalty is assessed either on the try or at the succeeding kickoff. For each quarter that they continue to wear the jerseys, the team is charged with a timeout after the ball is declared ready for play and before the ball is put in play for the first play of that quarter. If a team has no timeouts remaining, a delay of game penalty will be enforced.

### **Illegal Equipment—ARTICLE 7**

#### **Approved Ruling 1-4-7**

- I. A33 is wearing a bandanna under his helmet, with part of the bandanna protruding from underneath the back of the helmet. **RULING:** Illegal equipment. Bandannas may be worn under the helmet as long as no part of the bandanna is visible when the helmet is in place. The visible bandanna is considered a uniform attachment (1-4-7-h). A33 must leave the game for at least one down and may not return until the bandanna is removed or completely hidden under the helmet. Team A may request a team timeout, if one is available, to prevent A33 from missing a down, but the bandanna must be hidden or removed.
- II. At the end of a down, B55's shoulder pad has become exposed and is not covered by the jersey. **RULING:** Illegal equipment. Because the pad became exposed through play, B55 is not required to leave the game. The pad must be covered by the jersey before the ball is next put into play.
- III. Both teams come onto the field before the game wearing colored jerseys. The visiting team has not obtained written agreement from the home team to wear other than white jerseys, or if such agreement has been obtained the home team's conference has not certified that the jerseys are of contrasting colors. **RULING:** Foul by the visiting team for violation of the jersey-color rule. After the ball is marked ready for play for the opening kickoff, the referee charges the visiting team with a timeout for illegal jerseys. In addition, there will be a 15-yard penalty at the succeeding spot following the kickoff starting each half. If the kickoff is returned for a touchdown, the penalty is assessed either on the try or at the succeeding kickoff. For each quarter that they continue to wear the jerseys, the team is charged with a timeout after the ball is declared ready for play and before the ball is put in play for the first play of that quarter. If a team has no timeouts remaining, a delay of game penalty will be enforced. (1-4-5-b)
- IV. As Team A is about to break its huddle, the Referee notices that A35 is wearing an overbuilt facemask. **RULING:** A35 must leave the game for one down to get a legal facemask. Team A may use an available charged timeout in order that A35 not miss a down, but he may not play with the illegal facemask.

- V. Each member of the offensive line is wearing a towel, all of which are white, 4" by 12", with a small team logo. The snapper's towel also has a large skull-and-cross-bones symbol. **RULING:** It is legal for any player to wear a towel. The towels are all legal except the snapper's. He must leave the game for at least one down and may not return until the towel is removed or replaced with one that is legal. Team A may keep him in the game by using a charged timeout, but he may not wear the illegal towel. (Rules 1-4-6-a and 1-4-8)
- VI. A player writes or paints advertisements, messaging and/or inscriptions on their shoes and plans to wear them during the game. **RULING:** Not allowed by rule. Appendix E, A-11 allows for uniforms and all other items of apparel to bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark not to exceed 2.25 square inches in area. To allow the student athlete's voice to be heard, the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) has expanded the size of the insignia patch to 16 square inches to allow players to celebrate or memorialize persons, events or social justice causes (Rule 1-4-6-d). Additionally, the student athlete as authorized by the institution or conference, is allowed other names/words intended to celebrate or memorialize persons, events, or other causes on the back of the jersey/uniform where the player's name is traditionally located. The names/words may vary by team member.
- VII. A player enters the field during pre-game warmups after the officials' jurisdiction begins wearing a tee shirt with (a) an advertisement with the shirt including a number that is readily visible; (b) a social justice message with the shirt including a number that is readily visible; (c) no number readily visible. **RULING:** The tee shirt in (a) is not allowed by rule as advertisements are not allowed on the uniform or any items of apparel (Exception – Post-season game as outlined in Rule 1-4-5); (b) legal; (c) not allowed as per Rule 3-1-1-c. There is no yardage penalty for (a) and (c) but the player must leave the playing enclosure. Officials are encouraged to seek out the Head Coach, Equipment Manager or Game Management to take the appropriate action.

### **Mandatory and Illegal Equipment Enforcement—ARTICLE 8**

#### **Approved Ruling 1-4-8**

- I. After the ball is ready for play, an official identifies a player(s) who is obviously not wearing a mouthpiece. **RULING:** The player(s) must leave the game for at least one down and may not return until properly equipped with a mouthpiece. The player(s) may remain in the game by spending an available team timeout, but they may not play until properly equipped.
- II. Late in the first half, Team B has used its three timeouts. At the end of a play the line judge notices that B44, a player who participated in the previous play, is equipped with an eye shield that is either tinted or not clear. **RULING:** Equipment violation. B44 must leave the game for at least one down and may not return if he is wearing an illegal eye shield.
- III. When the ball is dead after a scrimmage down, the Umpire notices that linebacker B55 has an exposed back pad at waist level, which apparently became exposed through play during the previous down. **RULING:** B55

is not required to leave the game, but he must cover the exposed pad with his jersey before the next down.

### **Prohibited Field Equipment—ARTICLE 11**

#### **Approved Ruling 1-4-11**

- I. The Head Coach of the home team is unable to attend the game in person and wants to monitor the TV broadcast and (a) call in plays via cell phone to the offensive coordinator and (b) use a virtual application (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) to communicate with the team in the locker room. **RULING:** Rule 1-4-11-b is specific and allows only voice communication between the press box and the team area, therefore in (a) the coach could not call into the press box or the sideline for anything related to coaching purposes. Rule 1-4-11-a would prohibit the use of technology including computers to be used for coaching purposes and this would include all virtual types of communication back to a team during the game. Consequently in (b) any virtual session with the team would not be allowed. This prohibition would begin at 90 minutes before the scheduled kickoff when the officiating crew assumes jurisdiction of the game and would include the time between periods until the end of the game when the Referee declares the score final.

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# RULE 2

## Definitions

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### Section 4. Catch, Recovery, Possession

#### Catch, Interception, Recovery—ARTICLE 3

##### Approved Ruling 2-4-3

- I. B1 attempts to catch a punt (no fair catch signal) that crosses the neutral zone, strikes his shoulder (a muff) and bounces into the air. The ball does not touch the ground. Airborne A1 receives the ball in flight and first returns to the ground out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline. First and 10.
- II. On third down, B1 blocks a Team A scrimmage kick that goes into the air and does not cross the neutral zone. The ball does not touch the ground. A1 jumps and grasps the ball in flight and first returns to the ground out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline. First and 10 (Rule 6-3-7).
- III. Airborne A3 receives a pass at Team A's 40-yard line. While still airborne, he is contacted by B1 and comes to the ground out of bounds with the ball at Team A's 37-yard line. **RULING:** Incomplete pass (Rule 7-3-7-a).
- IV. Receiver A88 is near the sideline, stretching to catch a legal forward pass. As A88 is going to the ground in the act of catching the pass, (a) A88 gains firm control of the ball with the toes down in bounds and falls out of bounds, maintaining firm control; (b) A88 gains firm control of the ball with toes down in bounds, bobbles the ball while airborne, regains firm control before landing out of bounds and maintains firm control when landing; (c) A88 gains firm control of the ball with toes down in bounds, falls out of bounds and loses firm control of the ball when contacting the ground. **RULING:** (a) Catch by A88. (b) Incomplete pass. (c) Incomplete pass.

### Section 8. Fair Catch

#### Invalid Signal—ARTICLE 3

##### Approved Ruling 2-8-3

- I. During Team A's punt from the A-20, receiver B44 points at the grounded punt at midfield. As B44 points at the ball, (a) he keeps his hands below his shoulders with no waving motion; (b) he keeps his hands below his shoulders and has a waving motion; (c) he has his hands just above the shoulders with no waving motion. **RULING:** Rule 2-8-3 states that any waving motion that does not meet the criteria for a valid signal is an invalid signal. Additionally, by interpretation the receiver is allowed to point at a



kick as long as his hands remain below the shoulder and there is no waving motion. Both (b) and (c) would be an Invalid Fair Catch Signal. In (a), this would not be considered a signal at all, and Team B would retain the right to recover the ball and advance.

## Section 11. Fumble, Muff: Batting and Touching the Ball; Blocking a Kick

### Touching—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 2-11-4

- I. A punt is rolling along the ground near players A44 and B27 who are engaged. (a) The ball bounces against the B27's leg and is then recovered by A55 at the B-35. (b) A44 blocks B27 into the ball which is then recovered by A55 at the B-35. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball, first and 10 at the B-35. The ball rolled into B27's leg but A44's contact did not cause him to touch the ball. Not forced touching. (b) Forced touching because the block by A44 caused B27 to touch the ball. Illegal touching by A55. Team B's ball at that point.

## Section 12. Lines

### Goal Lines—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 2-12-2

- I. Team A's untouched scrimmage kick strikes the ground in the field of play and breaks the plane of Team B's goal line. While the ball is in the air over the end zone, A81, who is either on the one-yard line or in the end zone, bats the ball into the field of play. **RULING:** Violation for illegal touching (Rule 6-3-11). Team B may accept the result of the play or next snap the ball at its 20-yard line (Exception: Rule 8-4-2-b).

### Restraining Lines—ARTICLE 5

#### Approved Ruling 2-12-5

- I. A free kick breaks the plane of Team B's restraining line. While the ball is in the air, A1, who is behind Team B's restraining line, touches the ball. **RULING:** Legal touching (Rule 6-1-3-b).

## Section 16. Kicks; Kicking the Ball

### Place Kick—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 2-16-4

- I. On a free kick to start a game, the kicker uses the toe of a teammate for a tee or builds a tee with a mound of dirt or sod. **RULING:** Illegal kick. Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.

### Kickoff—ARTICLE 6

#### Approved Ruling 2-16-6

- I. After a Touchdown and successful 2 point try, Team A trails 24 – 22 with 0:55 left in the 4th quarter. Team A intends to try an on-side free kick from the A-35. Kicker A90 holds the ball as if he will attempt a drop kick. A-90 then tosses the ball up in the air and the ball bounces just behind Team A's

restraining line and then A90 kicks the ball after it bounces several feet into the air. **RULING:** Illegal Kick. Dead-ball foul. Penalty – Five yards from the succeeding spot. This kick does not meet the requirements of a Drop Kick as required in Rule 2-16-3. For a legal drop kick the kicker must drop the ball and kick it as it touches the ground. Since Rule 2-16-6 only allows a place kick or a drop kick for a kickoff, this kick is not a legal kick. The penalty enforcement follows the current Approved Ruling 6-1-2, I.

### Scrimmage Kick Formation—ARTICLE 10

#### Approved Ruling 2-16-10

- I. At the snap Team A has four linemen numbered between 50-79 and three linemen numbered outside this range. A potential kicker is eight yards deep but there is no potential holder. **RULING:** Illegal formation. Team A is not in a scrimmage kick formation and does not have the required number of linemen with proper jersey numbers.

## Section 19. Passes

### Forward and Backward Pass—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 2-19-2

- I. A1 intends to throw a forward pass, but B1 bats the ball from his hand before A1's hand starts forward. **RULING:** Fumble (Rule 2-11-1).

### Crosses Neutral Zone—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 2-19-3

- I. QB A12 throws a legal forward pass, and receiver A88 first touches the pass when the ball is 1 ½ yards beyond the neutral zone. The receiver's back foot is not beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** The legal forward pass has crossed the neutral zone. Rule 2-19-3-a states that a pass has crossed the neutral zone when it strikes anything beyond the neutral zone. By Rule 2-19-3-b, A88 as a player is not beyond the neutral zone. Nevertheless, by Rule 2-19-3-a the pass has crossed the neutral zone since it was beyond the neutral zone when A88 touched it. The guiding principle on a pass crossing the neutral zone is the location of the ball when it is first touched.

## Section 23. Snapping the Ball

#### Approved Ruling 2-23-1

- I. Fourth and goal on Team B's five-yard line. A55's legal snap is muffed by A12 and (a) any player of Team A recovers and advances the ball into the end zone, or (b) a player of Team B recovers and advances the ball. **RULING:** The snap is a backward pass and may be advanced by any player. (a) Touchdown. Since this is a backward pass and not a fumble there is no restriction on a Team A player recovering and advancing the ball. (b) Ball continues in play.

## Section 27. Team and Player Designations

### Disqualified Player—ARTICLE 12

#### Approved Ruling 2-27-12

- I. A player is disqualified for a targeting foul in the second half. **RULING:** The player is not allowed to play in the first half of his team's next game. However, he is allowed to participate in pregame warmups with his team. He may not participate in the first half, but may remain in the team area. (Rules 9-1-3 and -4)
- II. A player is disqualified for a targeting foul in the second half of his team's last game of the regular football season. **RULING:** He is not allowed to play in the first half of his team's next game, whenever that is. If the game is the final one of the regular season, he may not play the first half of any postseason game. If his team does not play a postseason game, he may not play in the first half of the first game of the following season (assuming he has eligibility remaining). (Rules 9-1-3 and -4)
- III. Player number 21 for the home team was disqualified late in the 3rd quarter for Targeting and legally remains in the team area. Between the end of the 3rd quarter and the start of the 4th quarter, number 21 for the home team is flagged in the team area for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. **RULING:** Dead ball foul, 15-yard penalty from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Number 21 is ejected from the game and must leave the playing enclosure. Any player that has been disqualified and is subsequently penalized for Unsportsmanlike Conduct is automatically ejected.

## Section 30. Play Classification

### Running Play—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 2-30-4

- I. A21 catches a forward pass with his knees on the ground. The passer is roughed during the pass. **RULING:** A21's catch started a running play, which ended immediately. Penalize 15 yards from the end of the run, first down for Team A.
- II. Third and 10. A21 catches a forward pass and fumbles when tackled after gaining nine yards. The fumble is recovered by grounded A24 five yards in advance of the fumble. During the pass, the passer is roughed. **RULING:** Penalize 15 yards from the spot of recovery by A24 (end of last run), first down for Team A.

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# RULE 3

## Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

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### Section 1. Start of Each Period

#### Pregame—ARTICLE 1

##### Approved Ruling 3-1-1

- I. After the officials' jurisdiction has begun, a few home team players enter the playing enclosure without their game jersey, and do not have their numeral readily visible. **RULING:** The players with no game jersey or numeral readily visible must immediately leave the playing enclosure. The head coach or assistant coach(es) on the field may help with this situation.

#### Extra Periods—ARTICLE 3

##### Approved Ruling 3-1-3

- I. Other than on the try, Team B scores a touchdown after intercepting a forward pass, intercepting or recovering a backward pass or fumble, or returning a blocked field goal attempt. **RULING:** Period and game are ended, and Team B is the winner.
- II. During the first possession series of a period, Team B intercepts a forward pass, or intercepts or recovers a fumble or a backward pass, and does not score a touchdown. **RULING:** Team A's possession series is ended and Team B starts its series. Team B becomes Team A when the referee declares the ball ready for play.
- III. During the first possession series of a period, Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. Team A recovers the ball and runs for a touchdown. **RULING:** Six points for Team A. Team B begins its possession series after the try.
- IV. Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. A23 recovers the ball and is tackled beyond the line to gain. **RULING:** Team A retains the ball to continue its possession series. First and 10.
- V. On first, second or third down, Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. A23 recovers the ball and is tackled short of the line to gain. **RULING:** Team A's ball, next down.
- VI. During the first possession series of a period, Team B gains possession and then loses possession to Team A, which (a) scores a touchdown; (b) does not score a touchdown. **RULING:** (a) The score counts. In both (a) and (b), Team A's possession series ends and Team B begins its possession series.
- VII. During the first possession series of a period, Team A fumbles into Team B's end zone on second down of a series. Team B recovers and downs the ball in

- its end zone. **RULING:** Team A's possession series is ended. Team B begins its possession series.
- VIII. During the first possession series of a period, B10 intercepts a forward pass on his six-yard line and downs the ball in his end zone. **RULING:** Safety: two points for Team A. Team A's possession series is over. Team B will put the ball in play, first and 10 on the 25-yard line at the same end of the field.
- IX. Team A's field goal attempt is untouched beyond the neutral zone until B17 muffs it at the five-yard line. A75 recovers at the three-yard line. **RULING:** Team A's possession series continues; first down for Team A at the three-yard line.
- X. On the first possession series of a period, Team A scores a touchdown. On the try, Team B intercepts a pass and returns it for a two-point touchdown. **RULING:** Team B starts its possession series at the 25-yard line with Team A leading in the overtime 6-2.
- XI. After the end of the first possession series by Team A, Team B commits a dead-ball foul. **RULING:** Team B starts its possession series on the 40-yard line, first and 10.
- XII. During the first possession series of a period, A12 throws a forward pass and Team A is flagged for an illegal shift. B25 intercepts the pass, and B38 a) clips or (b) commits a flagrant personal foul before B25 crosses Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Score not allowed. The fouls cancel and the down is not repeated. Team A's possession series is ended, and a) Team B begins its possession series at the 25-yard line; b) B38 is ejected and Team B begins its possession series at the 40-yard line.
- XIII. During the second possession series of a period, B25 intercepts a pass and carries the ball across Team A's goal line. During the run, B79 clips at midfield. **RULING:** No touchdown. Either the game is over, or the next period will start with first and 10 at the 25-yard line, since the penalty is not carried over.
- XIV. During the first possession series B37 intercepts a forward pass and has a clear field to the goal line when he makes an obscene gesture toward the nearest opponent. **RULING:** Team B's score is canceled and the penalty is carried over. Team B begins its possession series on the 40-yard line, first and 10 (Rules 3-1-3 and 3-1-3-g-1 and 2).

## Section 2. Playing Time and Intermissions

### Timing Adjustments—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 3-2-2

- I. At halftime the score is 56-0. The coaches and the referee agree that the third and fourth quarters should be shortened to 12 minutes each. The coaches also request that the second half be played with a "running clock," i.e., that the game clock not be stopped. **RULING:** The remaining quarters may be shortened to 12 minutes each. However, the "running clock" is not allowed; normal clock rules apply for the entire game.

## Extension of Periods—ARTICLE 3

### Approved Ruling 3-2-3

- I. During the extension of a period after the ball is ready for play and before the snap, Team A commits a foul. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Team A is penalized for the foul and is entitled to complete the down.
- II. Time expires during Team A's free kick. A1 is offside on the kick. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot, the end of Team B's run, or the touchback spot, and the period is extended. Repeat the free kick or Team B is awarded an untimed down.
- III. Time expires during Team A's attempted field goal. Team B was offside. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot, the period is extended (Rules 10-2-2-d-4-a).
- IV. A Team A player interferes with the opportunity to catch a kick (not a try) during a down in which time expires. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul. The period is extended.
- V. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. After the touchdown, but before the try, either team fouls. **RULING:** The period is extended only for the try. The penalty may be enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff, or the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- VI. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. During Team A's successful try, Team B fouls. **RULING:** The period is not extended for the kickoff. Team A may accept the penalty and repeat the try, or decline the penalty and accept the score. Penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct are enforced on the subsequent kickoff or the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- VII. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. After the try ends, either team commits a dead-ball foul. **RULING:** The try may be repeated for an accepted penalty if a live-ball foul occurred during the try; the penalty for the dead-ball foul will then also be enforced on the repeated try. The period is not extended to enforce a penalty for a dead-ball foul. If accepted, this penalty must be enforced on the kickoff to start the next period or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- VIII. Time expires in the first half on a play in which A12 is beyond the neutral zone when he completes a pass to A88 in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Team B accepts the penalty to nullify the score, and at the option of the offended team the period is not extended because the penalty includes loss of down. The first half ends.

## Timing Devices—ARTICLE 4

### Approved Ruling 3-2-4

- I. When the ball is dead after a running play that ends out of bounds, the 40-second play clock is started. The umpire receives the ball from the line judge, and as he is placing it on the ground, he sees that it is one of Team B's balls. He tosses the ball to the line judge who attempts to get a Team A ball from the ball boy. **RULING:** If the play clock reads 25 or less before the correct ball is in from the sideline and ready for play, the Referee declares a timeout and signals to reset the play clock to 25 seconds. When the correct ball is ready for play he signals to start the play clock and the game clock.

- II. When the ball is dead after a running play that ends in the side zone, the officials have difficulty getting the ball in to the hash mark. As the play clock nears 25, the Umpire places the ball on the ground, and by the time the officials are ready, the play clock is somewhat below 25 when the Umpire steps away. **RULING:** Without stopping the game clock, the Referee gives the “pump” signal to indicate that the play clock is to be reset to 25. If the play clock is quickly reset to 25, the game clock does not stop. Only if the play clock operator does not quickly respond to the Referee’s “pump” signal will the Referee declare a timeout, signal for the play clock to be set at 25, and then signal to start both the play and game clocks.
- III. Team A scores a Touchdown and the 40 second play clock is started. Without stopping the game, the Referee receives positive confirmation from the Replay Official that the Touchdown is good. The play clock displays: (a) 25 or more seconds, or (b) 24 or less seconds. **RULING:** The Referee (a) signals to clear the Center Judge and allow the ball to be snapped. (b) The Referee will signal the play clock be reset to 25 seconds, and will then signal to clear the Center Judge and allow the ball to be snapped.
- IV. Team A scores a Touchdown and the 40 second play clock is started. With less than 25 seconds on the play clock, Team A Head Coach or Team Captain requests the ball be moved to the left hash mark. **RULING:** The officials will not honor the request. Team A may call a timeout to relocate the ball unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls.

### **Minimum Time For A Play After Spiking The Ball—ARTICLE 5**

#### **Approved Ruling 3-2-5**

- I. Late in a quarter Team A, out of timeouts, makes a first down, stopping the clock which reads 0:03. Team A intends to spike the ball and run an additional play. The referee appropriately blows his whistle and signals, which starts the game clock. The quarterback takes the snap and raises the ball high over his head before throwing it directly to the ground. The game clock shows 0:00. **RULING:** Time in the quarter has expired. Although there were 3 seconds on the game clock when the referee signaled it to start, there is no guarantee of enough time to run an additional play other than spiking the ball. The offense must execute the spike in a timely manner.

## **Section 3. Timeouts: Starting and Stopping the Clock**

### **Timeout—ARTICLE 1**

#### **Approved Ruling 3-3-1**

- I. On third and 2-1/2, A45 fumbles a live ball after gaining three yards. The officials cannot determine who has recovered the fumble, so the line judge signals the clock to stop while the ball is being located. A45 is found to be in possession of the ball and (a) has not made his line to gain or (b) has made his line to gain. **RULING:** The 40-second clock starts when the ball is declared dead. (a) The referee immediately will signal the game clock to start. (b) The game clock will start on the referee’s signal when the ball is ready for play.
- II. On second and 14, A45 gains six yards and is downed with the ball in his possession. The linesman, mistaking the back stake of the line-to-gain chain for the front stake, erroneously signals the clock to stop. **RULING:** As soon as

the error is detected by any official, the signal to start the clock shall be given by the game official detecting the error.

- III. Team A fumbles or the ball is loose after a backward pass. Several players dive on the ball, creating a “pile.” **RULING:** The covering official(s) shall stop the clock and the 40-second clock shall start. Upon positive knowledge of who recovered, the referee will point in the direction governed by possession and start the game clock (a) immediately if Team A has recovered short of the line to gain (no first down), or (b) on the snap if Team B has recovered.
- IV. A shoelace, padlace, jersey, number or equipment breaks or tears. **RULING:** No referee’s discretionary timeout permitted for repair or replacement.

## Starting and Stopping the Clock—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 3-3-2

- I. Fourth and six. Team A’s running play, which ends inbounds, gains (a) eight yards or (b) five yards. B1 is offside during the play. **RULING:** (a) Team A’s ball. First and 10. The clock starts on the referee’s signal. (b) Team A’s ball. Fourth and one. The clock starts on the referee’s signal. (Rules 3-3-2-e-1 and e-4)
- II. Fourth and four. Team A’s running play, which ends inbounds, gains (a) six yards or (b) three yards. B1 is offside during the play. **RULING:** (a) Team A’s ball, first and 10. The clock starts on the referee’s signal. (b) Team A’s ball, first and 10 after accepting the penalty. The clock starts on the referee’s signal.
- III. Third and four. Team A’s pass is intercepted by B1, who is downed inbounds. B2 was offside during the play. **RULING:** Team A’s ball. First and 10. The clock starts on the referee’s signal. Although the clock was stopped to award Team B a first down, Team B will not next snap the ball.
- IV. Late in the second or fourth quarter, ball carrier A37 goes out of bounds. When the game clock is stopped it reads (a) 2:00, or (b) 1:59. **RULING:** (a) The game clock starts on the referee’s signal when the ball is ready for play. (b) The game clock starts on the snap.
- V. Late in the second or fourth quarter, Team A has second and eight. B44 intercepts a legal forward pass and carries the ball out of bounds. B79 is in the neutral zone at the snap. When the game clock is stopped it reads (a) 2:00, or (b) 1:59. **RULING:** Team A accepts the penalty and retains possession of the ball. In both (a) and (b) the game clock starts on the referee’s signal, because Team B will not next snap the ball. In (b) if Team B is leading, the clock will start on the snap.
- VI. Fourth and eight at the A-12, late in the fourth quarter. The punt is blocked and the ball does not cross the neutral zone. At the A-10, back A22 recovers the ball and throws a forward pass to eligible A88 who is tackled at the B-3. The game clock reads 0:03. **RULING:** Team A’s ball at the B-3, first and goal. The game clock starts on the snap because of the legal kick play. (Rules 3-3-2-d-8, 3-3-2-e-1, 3-3-2-f)
- VII. Free Kick @ A-35. Team A executes an on-side kick. After the ball has traveled 10 yards, (a) B21 gives a valid fair catch signal and makes a clean catch; (b) A80 is first to touch the ball and makes a clean legal catch or recovery; (c) B21 catches or recovers the ball and immediately goes to the ground; (d) B21 makes a clean recovery with their knees on the ground. **RULING:** The ball



is declared dead and, (a) No time will run off the clock; (b) No time will run off the clock; (c) the clock operator shall start the clock when the ball is legally touched and will stop the clock when the ball is declared dead (Rule 3-3-2-a); (d) No time will run off the clock.

- VIII. Third and five at the B-15 late in the fourth quarter, with Team A trailing 10-7. Quarterback A11 rolls out and is at the B-12 when he throws a forward pass that is incomplete. When the ball is dead the game clock shows 0:13. Team B accepts the penalty for the illegal forward pass. **RULING:** Fourth and seven at the B-17. Team B has the option for a 10-second runoff. Assuming that Team B accepts the runoff, the game clock is set at 0:03 and starts on the referee's signal.

### **Suspending the Game—ARTICLE 3**

#### **Approved Ruling 3-3-3**

- I. A game between teams from different conferences has been suspended in the middle of the third quarter very late at night due to weather. It is clear that the game cannot be resumed. The directors of athletics for the participating teams are unable to arrive at an agreement on which option should be in effect. **RULING:** The outcome of the game is determined by the conference policy of the home team.

### **Charged Team Timeouts—ARTICLE 4**

#### **Approved Ruling 3-3-4**

- I. Before the snap, a legal substitute of either team running from the bench requests a timeout before being within the nine-yard marks. He then requests a timeout again after being within the nine-yard marks. **RULING:** Initial timeout request not granted. Second request granted (Rule 7-1-3-b).

### **Injury Timeout—ARTICLE 5**

#### **Approved Ruling 3-3-5**

- I. At the end of a play, with the game clock running, the referee notices that A22 is bleeding. **RULING:** The referee stops the clock and declares an injury timeout. A22 leaves the field of play or the end zone for treatment by appropriate medical personnel. Unless there is also an injury to a Team B player the play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rule 3-2-4-c-4).
- II. After being treated for a bleeding or oozing wound, A22 (A.R. 3-3-5-1) attempts to enter the game before the next snap. **RULING:** A22 must remain out of the game for at least one play. In any event, he may return only on the approval of his team professional medical personnel.
- III. B52's jersey has blood spots on it. **RULING:** Unless the official determines that the jersey is saturated with blood, B52 may remain in the game. (Note: Saturated is defined as soaked with moisture or drenched. If blood has penetrated through a garment to the skin or can be transferred to another player or game official, the garment is saturated.)
- IV. An official notices that blood has soaked through B10's jersey. **RULING:** B10 must leave the game until medical personnel have determined if the jersey must be replaced.

- V. B10 tackles A12. An official determines that B10's jersey is saturated with blood from a cut on A12's arm. **RULING:** Both players must leave the game—A12 for treatment of his open wound, B10 for a determination by medical personnel as to whether he has to replace his jersey.
- VI. During a dead-ball interval, A85 notices a bleeding cut on his arm. He voluntarily goes to the team area and is replaced by A88. **RULING:** This is a legal substitution and there is no variation in game timing. A85 may return to the game after the injury has been treated, but he must adhere to substitution rules.
- VII. On second down the Team A ball carrier is tackled inbounds. The clock is then stopped for an injury to a player of Team B. (a) No other players are injured on the play. (b) There is also an injury to a player of Team A. (c) The referee grants a media timeout. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c) upon preparing to resume play the referee will indicate that the play clock be set to 40 seconds. Both the play clock and the game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal.
- VIII. Late in the half ball carrier A35 is tackled. B79 goes to the ground with an injury and the officials stop the game clock, which shows (a) 12 seconds; (b) eight seconds. **RULING:** Team A has the option of a 10-second runoff. If there is no 10-second runoff the game clock starts on the snap. If Team A accepts the option, (a) there will be two seconds on the game clock which will start on the referee's signal; (b) time in the half has expired.
- IX. Late in the half ball carrier A35 is tackled beyond the line to gain. B79 goes to the ground with an injury. **RULING:** There is no option for a 10-second runoff because the game clock stops on the first down as well as the injury. The game clock starts on the referee's signal.

## Helmet Comes Off--Timeout—ARTICLE 9

### Approved Ruling 3-3-9

- I. After the ball is dead, A55 blocks B33 at his waist, knocking him to the ground. As B33 hits the ground his helmet comes off. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul by A55, 15-yard penalty from the succeeding spot. B33 must leave the game for the next down as his helmet came off through play and not due to a helmet foul. B33 may remain in the game if Team B takes a timeout.
- II. Late in the first quarter ball carrier A22 is legally tackled, and his helmet comes off just after his back hits the ground. The game clock reads 0:00. **RULING:** A22 must leave the game for the next down, which will be the initial down of the second quarter. A22's helmet came off through play and there was no helmet foul by Team B. However, A22 may remain in the game if Team A takes a timeout.
- III. During the down A22's helmet comes off (no helmet foul by the defense) and B77 goes down with an injury. The ball carrier is tackled inbounds. When the clock is stopped it reads 0:58 in the fourth quarter. **RULING:** Unless Team A takes a charged timeout, A22 must leave the game for one play. The play clock is set at 40 seconds, due to the defensive injury, rather than 25 seconds due to the helmet coming off the offensive player. There is no option for a 10-second runoff because the clock stops for both the helmet off and the injury, and these occur for opposing players.
- IV. During the down A22's helmet comes off (no helmet foul by the defense) and A45 goes down with an injury. The ball carrier is tackled inbounds. When

the clock is stopped it reads 0:58 in the fourth quarter. **RULING:** Because the injury and the helmet off occur to players on the same team, there is an option for a 10-second runoff. Team A may keep A22 in the game and also avoid the 10-second runoff by taking one charged timeout.

- V. During a play running play that ends in bounds, a linebacker's helmet comes off. When the ball becomes dead the game clock is stopped and reads 0:45 in the second quarter. **RULING:** The play clock is set at 40 seconds. Team A has the option for a 10-second runoff. If Team A exercises this option, unless Team B is charged with a timeout the game clock is set to 0:35 and starts on the Referee's signal. If Team B uses a timeout to avoid the 10-second runoff, the game clock remains at 0:45, the play clock is set at 25 and starts on the Referee's signal, and the game clock starts on the snap.

## Section 4. Delays

### Illegal Delay of the Game—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 3-4-2

- I. After any timeout, one of the teams is not ready to play. **RULING:** Illegal delay. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- II. On a running play late in the half the Team A ball carrier is tackled inbounds. Team B players are deliberately slow to “unpile” in an obvious attempt to consume time and prevent the officials from making the ball ready for play. **RULING:** Team B foul for delay of game. Penalty—five yards for the succeeding spot. The game clock will start on the snap (Rule 3-4-3).

### Unfair Clock Tactics—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 3-4-3

- I. In an attempt to consume time in the fourth period, Team A stalls and the play clock expires. **RULING:** Foul for delay of game. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. The clock starts on the snap.
- II. With two minutes remaining in either half and his team with no timeouts remaining, B77 crosses the neutral zone and touches a Team A player in an effort to conserve time. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal. At his discretion the referee may have the play clock set at 40 seconds. Note: If there is less than one minute remaining in the half, this foul comes under the 10-second runoff rule (Rule 3-4-4).
- III. A ball carrier, late in the second period, throws a backward pass out of bounds from behind or beyond the neutral zone to conserve time. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal. Note: If there is less than one minute remaining in the half, this foul comes under the 10-second runoff rule (Rule 3-4-4).
- IV. A ball carrier throws a forward pass while beyond the neutral zone to conserve time. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rule 7-3-2 Penalty). Note: If there is less than one minute remaining in the half, this foul comes under the 10-second runoff rule (Rule 3-4-4).

- V. Late in the fourth quarter Team A trails by four points and is driving for a potential score. After a running play on which the ball carrier is tackled inbounds, Team B players are obviously and deliberately slow in letting him get to his feet or otherwise are employing tactics to delay the officials in making the ball ready for play. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul against Team B, delay of game. When the ball is ready for play, the referee will signal the 25-second clock to start, and the game clock will start on the snap.
- VI. Second and seven at the A-25. Team A is ahead in the score late in the second quarter. When ball carrier A22 is tackled in the field of play, the game clock reads 1:47. The umpire reports to the referee that he has a flag for holding by snapper A55. On the play, A22 gained (a) three yards; (b) nine yards. **RULING:** In both a) and b), after enforcement of the penalty, the game clock starts on the snap or on the referee's signal, at the option of Team B.

### 10-Second Runoff From Game Clock--Foul—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 3-4-4

- I. Second and 10 at the B-30. The game clock is running in the second half. Team A trails by two points and is out of timeouts. After the ball is ready for play lineman A66 commits a false start, and when the officials stop the game clock it reads (a) 13 seconds; (b) 8 seconds. Team B accepts the yardage penalty and the clock runoff. **RULING:** (a) Five-yard penalty with 10 seconds subtracted from the game clock, which is set at 3 seconds. Second and 15 at the B-35. The clock starts on the referee's signal. (b) The game is over. Team B wins.
- II. Second and 10 at the B-30. The game clock is running in the second half. Team A trails by two points and is out of timeouts. At the snap Team A has five players in the backfield. A22 carries for a three-yard gain to the B-27. When the ball is declared dead the game clock reads (a) 13 seconds; (b) 8 seconds. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Five-yard penalty, illegal formation. Second and 15 at the B-35. Because the illegal formation is not a foul that causes the clock to stop immediately, the 10-second runoff does not apply. After the penalty is administered the game clock starts on the referee's signal.
- III. Team A is leading 24-21 with less than one minute in the game and the game clock running. With the ball ready for play on third and seven at the B-35, tackle B55 jumps across the neutral zone and contacts A77. The officials shut the play down with the game clock showing 0:38. Team B is out of timeouts. **RULING:** Offside against Team B. Five-yard penalty and a 10-second runoff from the game clock. The game clock is set at 0:28. Third and two at the B-30. The clock starts on the referee's signal.
- IV. Fourth quarter with the game clock running. Second and five at the B-20. Tackle B77 is in the neutral zone at the snap, but does not make contact. QB A12 rolls out to pass, runs to the B-17 and throws a forward pass, which falls incomplete. The game clock reads 0:15. **RULING:** Team A illegal forward pass and Team B offside. Offsetting fouls. No 10-second runoff. Second and 5 at the B-20. The game clock remains at 15 seconds and starts on the snap.
- V. Second and 10 at the B-30 with the game clock running. Team A trails in the score. Guard A66 in a three-point stance misses the snap count and lurches forward, committing a false start. B77 then commits a dead-ball personal foul or a dead-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. The game clock is stopped

- with 8 seconds remaining in the game. This occurs (a) in the fourth quarter; (b) in the second quarter. **RULING:** (a) The game is over because Team B will accept the 10-second runoff associated with the false start. Thus the penalty for B77's dead-ball foul is not enforced. (b) The half is over because Team B will accept the 10-second runoff associated with the false start. The penalty for the Team B dead-ball foul carries over to the second half. Due to the 10-second runoff, by interpretation the Team B dead-ball foul effectively occurs after the half has ended and the penalty is thus carried over. In either (a) or (b) Team A may avoid the 10-second runoff by using an available charged timeout. In that case the penalty for the foul by B77 would be enforced, giving Team A first and 10 at the B-20 after enforcement of both penalties.
- VI. Second quarter. At the snap the game clock reads 0:45. During the play, A55 loses his helmet. Right tackle A77 is flagged for holding. The ball carrier is tackled inbounds short of the line to gain. **RULING:** A55 must leave the game for one play. There is no option for a 10-second runoff, because at the end of the play the clock is stopped both for the helmet off and to administer the holding penalty. The play clock is set to 25 seconds and the game clock starts on the Referee's signal. (Rule 3-3-9)
- VII. 3/5 @ B-15 late in the fourth quarter, with Team A trailing 10-7. Quarterback A11 rolls out and is at the B-12 when he throws a forward pass that is incomplete. When the ball is dead the game clock shows 0:13. Team B accepts the penalty for the illegal forward pass. **RULING:** Fourth and seven at the B-17. Team B has the option for a 10-second runoff. Assuming that Team B accepts the runoff, the game clock is set at 0:03 and starts on the referee's signal.
- VIII. 2/7 @ A-5 late in the second quarter. Quarterback A11 drops back to pass and is scrambling in his end zone as he tries to find an open receiver. About to be tackled in the end zone, A11 throws the ball forward to the ground in an area where there are no eligible receivers. The referee throws a flag for intentional grounding. When the ball is dead the game clock shows 0:18. Team B accepts the penalty. **RULING:** The penalty results in a safety, and Team A will free kick at the A-20. Team B has the option for a 10-second runoff. If Team B accepts the runoff, the game clock is set at 0:08 and starts on the referee's signal. If Team B declines the runoff, the game clock remains at 0:18 and starts when the kicked ball is legally touched in the field of play.

## Section 5. Substitutions

### Legal Substitutions—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 3-5-2

- I. Any player(s), in excess of 11, obviously is withdrawing but has not reached a boundary line when the ball is put in play and he does not interfere with play or players. **RULING:** Live-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.
- II. After a change of team possession or any timeout, the ball is declared ready for play. When Team A has completed its offensive formation, Team B must promptly position its personnel. Team B will be allowed time to complete substitutions. **RULING:** Either team is subject to a delay-of-game foul—Team B for not completing its substitutions promptly (Rule 3-4-2-b-3) or

Team A for causing the 25-second clock to expire. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.

- III. On third down (no change of team possession), ball carrier A27 goes out of bounds or Team A's legal forward pass falls incomplete. During this interval between downs, there is no other referee's timeout. Before the fourth-down snap, substitute B75 enters the game and then departs without remaining in the game for one play. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- IV. Team A has 11 players in the huddle. A81 mistakenly thinks he has been replaced and runs to his team area. He is immediately sent back onto the field and assumes a position on the line of scrimmage near his sideline. The entire team has been stationary for one second before the snap and there has not been a referee's timeout. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. The player loses his status as a participant when he enters the team area while the ball is dead, and then must adhere to substitution rules. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot, or 15 yards from the succeeding spot if this is judged to be a violation of Rule 9-2-2-b (Rules 3-5-2-d and 9-2-2-b).
- V. After the ball is ready for play and the umpire (or center judge) is in his regular position, Team A quickly replaces some players with substitutes, gets set for the required one second and snaps the ball. The umpire (or center judge) is attempting to get to the ball to allow the defense to match up, but he is unable to prevent the snap. **RULING:** The play is shut down, the game clock is stopped and the defense is allowed to substitute in response to Team A's late substitutions. No foul. The play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts on the ready-for-play signal. The game clock starts on the ready-for-play signal or the snap, depending on its condition when play was stopped. The referee informs the Team A head coach that any subsequent such actions will result in a foul against the team for unsportsmanlike conduct under Rule 9-2-3.
- VI. After a down that resulted in first and 10 at the B-40, eleven players of Team A, which runs a no-huddle offense, move to their various positions to set for the next play. The ball is ready for play when A22 runs onto the field from his team area, and after he pauses the top of the numbers, he or the coaching staff apparently realizes that he is the 12th player. A22 then turns and runs back to his team area. The ball has not been snapped. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul for a substitution infraction. By interpretation A22 has become a player by entering his team's "effective huddle" and thus must remain in the game for one play. Five-yard penalty. Team A will have first and 15 at the B-45. (Rule 2-27-9-b)
- VII. Late in the first half Team A is out of timeouts. A pass play on third down ends inbounds at the B-25 short of the line to gain with the game clock showing 0:10. Facing fourth down and three, Team A immediately hurries its field goal team onto the field. **RULING:** Team B should reasonably expect that Team A will attempt a field goal in this situation and should have its field-goal defense unit ready. The umpire will not stand over the ball, as there should be no issue of the defense being uncertain about the next play.
- VIII. Late in the first half Team A is out of timeouts. A pass play on third down ends inbounds at the B-25 short of the line to gain with the game clock showing 0:30. Facing fourth down and three, Team A gives no indication as to its next play until the game clock reads 0:10. They then rush their field goal unit onto the field, and Team B then hurries to respond. **RULING:**

The umpire moves to the ball to prevent the snap until Team B has had a reasonable opportunity to get its field-goal defense unit onto the field. The umpire will step away when he judges that the defense has had enough time. If the game clock reads 0:00 before the ball is snapped after the umpire steps away, the half is over.

### More Than Eleven Players on the Field—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 3-5-3

- I. A33, an incoming substitute, enters the huddle or assumes a position in a formation and (a) after approximately two seconds, A34 leaves the huddle and departs the field of play at his sideline, or (b) after approximately four seconds, A34 leaves the huddle and departs the field of play at his sideline. **RULING:** (a) Legal. (b) Foul. (Note: A departing player who leaves the huddle or his position within three seconds is considered to have left immediately.)
- II. 3/5 @ B-35. Team B has 12 players in the formation, and no Team B player is attempting to leave the field while the ball is ready for play. Team A snaps the ball and the run by A44 gains 3 yards. **RULING:** Live ball foul, Team A 1/10 @ B-30.
- III. Team A has 11 players in its huddle when A27 approaches the huddle (within 10 yards) as it breaks. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 2-27-9-a).
- IV. 3/5 @ B-35. Team B has 12 players in the formation, and B44 recognizes that he is the 12th player and is attempting to leave the field. When the ball is snapped, (a) B44 is on the field but his next stride takes him off the field; or (b) B44 touches out of bounds just before the snap. Team A snaps the ball and the run by A44 gains 3 yards. **RULING:** (a) Live ball foul by B44. Team A 1/10 @ B-30. (b) No foul by B44, 4/2 @ B-32. To not be counted as the 12th player, B44 must be off of the field of play.
- V. Team A is in formation to kick a field goal and Team B has 11 players in its formation. Just before the ball is snapped a 12th Team B player runs onto the field. The ball is snapped and the kicker completes his kick. **RULING:** Live-ball foul. Five-yard penalty, previous spot, or Team A may accept the result of the play.
- VI. Team A lines up for a two-point try attempt at the B-3. Team B has eleven players in its defensive formation. The 12th Team B player runs onto the field just before or just as the ball is snapped. A22 takes the handoff from the quarterback and (a) is tackled at the one-yard line; or (b) carries the ball into the end zone. **RULING:** Live-ball foul against Team B for illegal substitution. (a) Penalize Team B half the distance to the goal and repeat the try at the B-1.5. (b) Team A will decline the penalty on the successful try.
- VII. 3/5 @ B-35. Team B has 12 players in the formation, and no Team B player is attempting to leave the field. The ball is ready for play, both teams are in formation and the snap is imminent. Quarterback A12, late in the play clock, is struggling to read the defense and (a) calls timeout; or (b) the play clock expires. **RULING:** When the deep officials count 12 Team B players, both teams are in formation, no Team B player is attempting to leave the field and the snap is imminent, (a) the crew will offer Team A their time out back and penalize Team B for a substitution foul. Team A 1/10 @ B-30 (b) no foul for delay of game, penalize Team B for a substitution foul. Team A 1/10 @ B-30.

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# RULE 4

## Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds

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### Section 1. Ball in Play—Dead Ball

#### Live Ball Becomes Dead—ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 4-1-2

- I. Team A punts on fourth and 15 at the A-30. B44 is in position to receive the kick. In attempting to catch the ball, B44 muffs it at the B-35. The back judge blows his whistle when it appears that B44 is catching the ball, but it rolls along the ground after B44 muffs it. A88 chases the ball, and in the immediate continuing football action he recovers it while grounded at the B-30. B22 is flagged for holding during the kick. **RULING: For games without Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 4-1-2-b-3 applies. The ball is returned to the previous spot and the 10-yard holding penalty is enforced. Team A retains possession and will have fourth and 5 at the A-40. **For games with Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 12-3-3-1 applies. Team A declines the penalty and will have the ball at the B-30, first and 10.
- II. Team A punts on fourth and 15 at the A-30. B44 is in position to receive the kick. In attempting to catch the ball, B44 muffs it at the B-35. The back judge blows his whistle when it appears that B44 is catching the ball, but it rolls along the ground after B44 muffs it. The ball disappears into a pile of players. B22 is flagged for holding during the kick. **RULING: For games without Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 4-1-2-b-3 applies. The ball is returned to the previous spot and the 10-yard holding penalty is enforced. Team A retains possession and will have fourth and 5 at the A-40. **For games with Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 12-3-3-1 applies. Since the Instant Replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers, the ruling of the dead ball stands. The holding penalty is enforced at the B-35, under postscrimmage kick rules. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-25.
- III. First and 10 at the B-45. Ball carrier A22 is tackled and is going to the ground, when he fumbles. An official sounds his whistle inadvertently. Players on both teams go after the ball, and B66 clearly recovers it while grounded. **RULING: For games without Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 4-1-2-b-2 applies. Team A will choose to repeat the down at the previous spot. **For games with Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 12-3-3-d applies. If the replay official determines that A22 lost control of the ball before he was down, then the ball belongs to Team B at the spot of the recovery by B66. In the event that the replay official is not able to determine which team recovers the ball, the ruling that the ball carrier was



down before losing control of the ball stands, and Team A retains possession at the dead-ball spot.

- IV. Team A punts on fourth and 15 at the A-30. B44 is in position to receive the kick. In attempting to catch the ball, B44 muffs it at the B-35. The back judge blows his whistle when it appears that B44 is catching the ball, but it rolls along the ground after B44 muffs it. A88 chases the ball, and in the immediate continuing football action he recovers it while grounded at the B-30. **RULING: For games without Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 4-1-2-b-3 applies. The ball is returned to the previous spot and the down repeated. Team A, fourth and 15 at the A-30. **For games with Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 12-3-3-1 applies. Team A will have the ball at the B-30, first and 10.
- V. Team A punts on fourth and 15 at the A-30. B44 is in position to receive the kick. In attempting to catch the ball, B44 muffs it at the B-35. The back judge blows his whistle when it appears that B44 is catching the ball, but it rolls along the ground after B44 muffs it. The ball disappears into a pile of players. **RULING: For games without Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 4-1-2-b-3 applies. The ball is returned to the previous spot and the down repeated. Team A, fourth and 15 at the A-30. **For games with Instant Replay:** Inadvertent whistle. Rule 12-3-3-1 applies. Since the Instant Replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers, the ruling of the dead ball stands. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-35.

### Ball Declared Dead—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 4-1-3

- I. While A1 is holding the ball for a place kick, Team B plays the ball by (a) recovering a loose ball, (b) snatching it from A1 or (c) batting it from his hands. **RULING:** (a), (b) and (c) The ball remains alive. In (c) the batting by Team B is legal and results in a fumble.
- II. Team A is in formation to attempt a field goal. At the snap A22 is in position to execute a right-footed place kick and A33 is in position as the holder. The snap goes to A33 who has a knee on the ground. Just after the snap A22 breaks to his left and toward the neutral zone, and A33, while still on his knee, flips a forward pass to A22 who carries the ball beyond the line to gain before he is tackled. **RULING:** Legal play, because at the snap A22 was in position to attempt a place kick. First and 10 for Team A.
- III. 3/10 @ A-35. Quarterback A11 sweeps to his right and goes into a feet-first slide to give himself up. When he starts his slide, the forward-most point of the ball is at the A-44, and when he comes to a stop the forward-most point of the ball is at the A-46. **RULING:** Fourth and one at the A-44. The ball is dead at its forward-most point when he starts his slide.
- IV. 3/10 @ B-40. QB A12 takes the snap and rolls out to the right. Finding no receiver open, A12 turns up field and runs. After making the line to gain, A12 breaks stride as if he is going to slide feet first at the B-27, stays upright and runs for a touchdown. **RULING:** The live ball becomes dead at the point where A12 simulates or fakes as if he will begin a feet-first slide. An official shall sound their whistle and declare the ball dead. Team A will have 1/10 @ B-27. A fake slide is not reviewable under Rule 12-3-3.

**Ball Ready for Play—ARTICLE 4****Approved Ruling 4-1-4**

- I. Snapper A1 snaps the ball before the ball is made ready for play. A2 muffs the snap and B1 recovers the ball. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul, Team A delay of game. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot, Team A's ball. The ball does not become alive, and all action should be stopped immediately by the game officials.
- II. Kicker A1 kicks off before the referee has declared the ball ready for play. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. The ball does not become alive, and all action should be stopped immediately by the game officials.

**Section 2. Out of Bounds****Player Out of Bounds—ARTICLE 1****Approved Ruling 4-2-1**

- I. An inbounds ball carrier bumps into or is touched by a player or game official on the sideline. **RULING:** The ball carrier is not out of bounds.
- II. Ball carrier A1 is running inbounds near the sideline when he is contacted by a squad member of Team B, who is on the sideline. **RULING:** Rule 4-2-1 states a player is out of bounds when any part of his person touches anything other than a player or an official. Penalty—15 yards or other unfair-action game administration-interference penalties (Rules 9-2-3 and 9-2-5).
- III. Team A executes an on-side kick at the A-35. A33 is running near the sideline and steps out of bounds at the A-45. At the A-47 he leaps and bats the ball forward, and it rolls out of bounds at the A-49. **RULING:** Foul against Team A for free kick out of bounds at the A-47. Airborne A33 is out of bounds when he touches the ball because he has not established himself in bounds after going out of bounds. Not a foul for batting the ball forward because the ball is dead as soon as A33 touches it (Rule 4-2-3-a).

**Loose Ball Out of Bounds—ARTICLE 3****Approved Ruling 4-2-3**

- I. A88 is airborne and secures firm control of A12's forward pass. A88's right foot lands inbounds and he maintains firm control of the ball as he contacts the ground. B28, who is standing out of bounds, has his hand touching the ball while A88 is airborne and in firm control of the ball. **RULING:** Completed forward pass.

**Out of Bounds at Forward Point—ARTICLE 4****Approved Ruling 4-2-4**

- I. A player with one foot out of bounds behind a goal line touches a loose ball in the field of play. **RULING:** Ball is out of bounds and dead at its most forward point in the field of play. If this loose ball was an untouched free kick, it is a free kick out of bounds and a foul. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot or Team B's ball 30 yards beyond Team A's free-kick line.

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# RULE 5

## Series of Downs, Line to Gain

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### Section 1. A Series: Started, Broken, Renewed

#### Forward Progress—ARTICLE 3

##### Approved Ruling 5-1-3

- I. Airborne A88 gains firm control of a legal forward pass one yard within the opponent's end zone. As A88 gains firm control the ball (a) he is contacted by B21 and A88 first comes to the ground on his knees at the one-yard line and maintains firm control of the ball: (b) A88 is contacted by B21 and A88 first comes to the ground on his feet at the one-yard line and maintains firm control of the ball. **RULING:** Touchdown in both (a) and (b) (Rule 5-1-3-a Exception 2, 8-2-1-b).
- II. Receiver A88 runs a route deep into Team B's end zone and circles back toward the QB A12 who throws the ball to A88. As A88 is coming back toward A12, A88 leaps and gains firm control of A12's legal forward pass one yard within Team B's end zone. Airborne A88 is not touched by a Team B player and first comes to the ground maintaining firm control of the ball at the one-yard line landing (a) on his knees; (b) on his feet. After A88 regains his balance, A88 runs and is downed at Team B's five-yard line. **RULING:** Not a touchdown: (a) Team A's ball at the B-1 where the ball is declared dead. (b) Team A's ball at the B-5 where the ball is declared dead.
- III. Airborne A2 receives a legal forward pass at Team A's 35-yard line. As A2 receives the ball, he is contacted by B1 and first comes to the ground with the ball at Team A's 33-yard line, where the ball is declared dead. **RULING:** Team A's ball at the 35-yard line (forward progress point).
- IV. A4, with the ball breaking the plane of the 50-yard line while in his possession, dives over the 50-yard line, which is the line to gain for a first down. He is knocked back to Team A's 49-yard line, where any part of his body except his hand or foot touches the ground. **RULING:** First down at forward progress spot (Rule 4-1-3-b).
- V. A6 has the ball in his possession and is not controlled by an opponent, as he dives over the 50-yard line, which is the line to gain for a first down, and is forced back across the 50-yard line. A6 continues to run and is tackled at Team A's 49-yard line, where any part of his body except his hand or foot strikes the ground. **RULING:** No first down. The point of forward progress is Team A's 49-yard line.
- VI. A5, with the ball breaking the plane of the goal line while in his possession, dives over the goal line and is knocked back to the one-yard line, where any

part of A5's body except his hand or foot touches the ground. **RULING:** Touchdown. The ball is dead when it breaks the plane of the goal line.

## Section 2. Down and Possession After a Penalty

### Foul Before Change of Team Possession—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 5-2-3

- I. Team A's fourth-down legal forward pass strikes the ground after it touches an originally ineligible receiver who is illegally more than three yards beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Foul, ineligible receiver downfield. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot. Team B's ball, first and 10, if the penalty is declined (Rule 7-3-10).

### Foul Between Downs—ARTICLE 6

#### Approved Ruling 5-2-6

- I. Fourth and two on Team A's 35-yard line. A1 takes the snap and fumbles the ball on Team A's 38-yard line, with the ball going out of bounds on (a) Team A's 40-yard line or (b) Team A's 30-yard line. Immediately after the ball goes out of bounds, Team A commits a personal foul. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball, first and 10 on Team A's 23-yard line. Start the clock on the ready-for-play signal. (b) Team B's ball, first and 10 on Team A's 15-yard line. Start the clock on the snap.

### Foul Between Series—ARTICLE 7

#### Approved Ruling 5-2-7

- I. Third and four on Team B's 30-yard line. Ball carrier A22 goes out of bounds on the 18-yard line. B88 commits a foul immediately after the ball is out of bounds. **RULING:** First and goal for Team A at the nine-yard line. Clock starts on the ready-except in the last two minutes of a half.
- II. Fourth and four at the A-16. Ball carrier A22 goes out of bounds at the A-18. A77 commits a foul immediately after the ball is out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball on the nine-yard line. First and goal. Start the clock on the snap.
- III. 4/5 at the A-25. Team A gains six yards and is awarded a new series. After the ball is ready for play and before the snap, A55 commits (a) a personal foul or (b) a false start. **RULING:** (a) First and 25. (b) First and 15.
- IV. Team A's ball, third and four from the 50-yard line. After the ball is made ready for play and before the snap, B60 charges across the neutral zone and contacts snapper A50. A61 then fouls B60. A61's foul is a personal foul. **RULING:** Penalize Team B five yards for B60's offside, then penalize Team A 15 yards and reset the line-to-gain indicator to indicate first and 10 from Team A's 40-yard line.
- V. After Team A has made a first down, the umpire has placed the ball on the ground at the B-30. The referee waves the umpire away from the ball but before he signals the ball ready for play, snapper A55 snaps the ball. **RULING:** Team A dead-ball foul for delay of game. Five-yard penalty, first and 10 at the B-35. **NOTE:** This is a foul between series in that it takes place before the ball is declared ready for the next series. Hence it is first and 10, not first and 15. (Rules 4-1-1, 4-1-4)

- VI. Ball carrier A22 is tackled hard by B44 at the B-5, resulting in first and goal. After the ball is dead, A22 gets up and punches B44. **RULING:** 15-yard penalty against Team A; A22 is ejected. After enforcement of the penalty, Team A will have first and 10 at the B-20.

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# RULE 6

## Kicks

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### Section 1. Free Kicks

#### Free-Kick Formation—ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 6-1-2

- I. The ball is kicked while teed illegally, punted on a kickoff or kicked from a spot between the hash mark and the nearer sideline. **RULING:** Illegal kick. Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 2-16-1-b).
- II. Kicker A11 places the ball on the tee in the center of the field for a free kick with four teammates to the left side of the ball and six teammates to the right side of the ball. The ball blows off the tee. A55, who was lined up to the left of the ball, then holds the ball on the tee for right-footed kicker A11. No other Team A players move. When the ball is kicked by A11, A55 is to the kicker's right. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for illegal formation at the kick. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.
- III. Free-kicker A11 places the ball on the tee just inside the hash mark line on his right. All of his teammates line up to his left. At the ready for play, four Team A players who were on A11's left run to their right and are in the area to A11's right when he kicks the ball. **RULING:** Legal formation.
- IV. A11 places the ball on the tee for a free kick on the 35-yard line in the center of the field. A12 lines up near the ball. After the ready for play, A11 starts forward as if to kick the ball, and A12 suddenly crosses in front of him and kicks the ball. When the ball is kicked, A11 is directly behind the ball with three teammates on one side of the ball. A12 plants his nonkicking foot on the same side of the ball as his three teammates. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for illegal formation. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot, and rekick if Team B chooses; or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.
- V. Team A is offside during its free kick. B27 has his knee on the ground when he recovers the kick. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for offside. The ball is dead at the spot of the recovery. Penalty—Team B may choose five yards from the previous spot and another free kick, or five yards from the dead-ball spot with a first and 10. B27's recovery started a running play that ended immediately. This scenario also would have been valid if B27 had completed a fair catch.
- VI. Team A is offside on its free kick and B17 catches the ball at his 15-yard line. B17 returns the ball to his 45-yard line where he fumbles. A67 recovers at the B-47 and runs to the B-35 where he fumbles, with B20

recovering while downed at his 33-yard line. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for offside. Team B may choose to have Team A kick again after a five-yard penalty from the previous spot, or Team B may have first and 10 at its 38-yard line.

- VII. Team A is in its formation to kick off at the A-35. Two players, A33 and A66, are positioned in a four-point stance with their feet on the A-29 and their hands on the A-31. The untouched kick hits the ground in Team B's end zone and is declared dead. **RULING:** Touchback. Team A foul, illegal formation. Team B has two options for accepting the penalty: Put the ball in play at the B-30, after a five-yard penalty at the spot (the B-25) where the dead ball belongs to them; or have Team A re-kick at the A-30. (Rule 6-1-8)
- VIII. Late in the game with the score tied, Team A lines up to free kick from the A-35. Kicker A10 places the ball down at the right hash for an apparent outside kick. After the Referee's ready-for-play signal, A10 approaches the ball and then picks up the ball runs to the left hash at the A-35, places the ball down and quickly kicks the ball. **RULING:** By interpretation, once the ball position between the hash marks has been selected by Team A and after the ready-for-play, the ball may be relocated only after a charged team timeout or before any re-kick. Dead-ball foul. Five yard penalty from the previous spot.

### Free-Kick Recovery—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 6-1-3

- I. A33 illegally touches a free kick; then he or A44 illegally recovers the kick. **RULING:** Illegal touching by both A33 and A44. Unless there is an accepted penalty or offsetting fouls, Team B may elect to take the ball at any spot of the illegal touching.
- II. Team A executes an on-side free kick at the A-35. The untouched kick is at the A-43 when A55 blocks B44 above the waist in the front at the A-46. A28 muffs the ball at the A-44, and after it rolls to the A-46, A88 blocks B22 at the A-42. A20 then recovers the ball at the A-44. **RULING:** The block by A55 is a foul and the touching by A28 is illegal, because Team A is not eligible to touch the ball since it has not gone 10 yards nor has it been touched by Team B. The block by A88 is legal because it occurs after the ball has gone 10 yards. Team A is in legal possession of the ball when A20 recovers it at the A-44. Team B has two options: Decline the penalty for the illegal block and have the ball at the A-44 via the illegal-touching privilege, or cancel the illegal-touching privilege by having Team A re-kick from the A-30 after the 5-yard penalty for the block by A55. Note that the dead-ball spot, the A-44, is not an enforcement spot because the ball does not belong to Team B when the down ends. (Rule 6-1-12)

## Section 2. Free Kick Out of Bounds

### Kicking Team—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 6-2-1

- I. A kickoff from Team A's 35-yard line goes out of bounds untouched by Team B, and Team A has illegally touched the kick. **RULING:** Team B

has four options: It may snap the ball at the spot of the illegal touching violation; accept a five-yard penalty from the previous spot with Team A kicking from the 30-yard line; put the ball in play at the inbounds spot on its 35-yard line; or put the ball in play at the inbounds spot five yards from where the ball went out of bounds (Rule 6-1-8).

- II. Team A is offside or commits a substitution infraction, and the kickoff from the 35-yard line goes out of bounds after it has been touched by Team B. **RULING:** For either the offside foul or the substitution foul, Team B may elect to have the kick repeated at Team A's 30-yard line, or snap the ball at the inbounds spot five yards from where the ball went out of bounds (Rule 6-1-8).

## Receiving Team—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 6-2-2

- I. A free kick from Team A's 35-yard line, untouched by Team B, goes out of bounds between the goal lines, and Team A was offside. **RULING:** Team B has these options: It may accept a five-yard penalty at the previous spot with Team A re-kicking from the 30-yard line; snap the ball at its 35-yard line at the inbounds spot; or snap the ball at the inbounds spot five yards from where the ball went out of bounds.
- II. A free kick from Team A's 35-yard line, untouched by Team B, goes out of bounds between the goal lines, and Team A fouled after the ball went out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B has the choice of Team A kicking again after a five-yard penalty followed by a 15-yard penalty, or putting the ball in play at the inbounds spot either on the 50-yard line or at the inbounds spot 20 yards beyond the spot where the ball went out of bounds.
- III. A free kick in flight strikes a Team B player who is in his end zone, and the ball then goes out of bounds at the three-yard line. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first and 10, on the three-yard line at the inbounds spot.
- IV. Free kick at the A-35. B17 leaps from inbounds and is the first player to touch Team A's free kick when he grasps the ball while airborne. He then lands out of bounds with the ball in his control. **RULING:** Not a foul for free kick out of bounds. B17 is inbounds when he touches the kick. Team B will have the ball at the yard line where B17 crossed the sideline. (Rule 2-27-15)

## Section 3. Scrimmage Kicks

### Behind the Neutral Zone—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 6-3-1

- I. After a punt travels five yards beyond the neutral zone, B33 touches the ball. It then rebounds behind the zone, where A33 recovers it in the field of play. **RULING:** The ball is dead when recovered and may not be advanced. First down for Team A (Rules 6-3-3 and 6-3-6-a). Clock starts on the snap following a legal kick down.
- II. Team A's untouched punt or field goal attempt goes beyond the neutral zone in flight, is blown back by the wind and first touches the ground, a player or an official behind the neutral zone. **RULING:** By rule, the kick is not considered to have crossed the neutral zone until it has touched the



ground, a player, an official or anything beyond that zone. Any scrimmage kick may be advanced after catch or recovery by Team B, or after catch or recovery by Team A in or behind the neutral zone if the kick had not crossed the neutral zone (Rule 2-16-7).

- III. A1 interferes with B1's opportunity to catch a kick when a scrimmage kick fails to cross the neutral zone. **RULING:** Interference with the opportunity to catch a kick does not apply (Rule 6-4-1), and all players are eligible to touch, recover and advance the ball. Therefore, any player legally may push an opponent in an actual attempt to get at the ball (Rule 9-3-6); but no player may hold an opponent to prevent his reaching the ball or in an attempt to permit a teammate to reach it (Rules 9-1-5 Exception 3).
- IV. Team A's punt from behind its own goal line crosses the neutral zone into the field of play, strikes a Team B player and rebounds back across Team A's goal line, where A32 recovers. **RULING:** Safety (Rules 6-3-3, 6-3-6-a and 8-5-1-a).

## **Beyond the Neutral Zone—ARTICLE 2**

### **Approved Ruling 6-3-2**

- I. Team A illegally touches its kick; then after Team B has touched it, Team A recovers. **RULING:** Touching by Team A after Team B has touched the kick is legal; and, in order to get the ball, Team B must take it where Team A illegally touched it. Unless illegal touching is also illegal recovery by the kicking team and no fouls are involved, the receiving team may play the ball with the assurance that it later may elect the ball at any spot of illegal touching.
- II. During a scrimmage kick, A1 commits a touching violation, after which B1 recovers, advances and fumbles. A2 recovers the fumble and, during the advance, B2 holds, trips or punches. **RULING:** Team A may have the ball where left by the penalty for Team B's foul; but if Team A declines the penalty, Team B will have the ball by electing the touching violation. B2 is ejected if flagged for fighting.
- III. Team A's punt goes beyond the neutral zone and is first touched by A80, then picked up by B40, who runs five yards and fumbles. A20 picks up the fumble and scores. During A20's run, B70 holds. **RULING:** The score does not count. Five- and 10-yard penalties are not administered on the try or the succeeding kickoff. The penalty for Team B's foul is declined by rule, because there is no enforcement spot. The ball belongs to Team B at the spot of illegal touching (Rule 10-2-5-a-2).
- IV. Team A's punt goes beyond the neutral zone and is first touched by A80, then picked up by B40, who runs five yards and fumbles. B70 holds during B40's run. A20 picks up the fumble and scores. **RULING:** The score does not count. Five- and 10-yard penalties are not administered on the try or the succeeding kickoff. Because the illegal touching provides an enforcement spot, the penalty for Team B's foul may be enforced, per Rule 5-2-4. The ball belongs to Team B, either at the spot of illegal touching if Team A declines the penalty, or at the spot after the enforcement if Team A accepts the penalty (Rules 10-2-2 and 10-2-5-a-2).

## Forced Touching Disregarded—ARTICLE 4

### Approved Ruling 6-3-4

- I. Team A punts from its own 30-yard line. The untouched kick is bouncing at Team B's three-yard line when A3 blocks B1 into the ball, forcing it through the end zone and over the end line. **RULING:** Touchback. Since A3 blocked B1 into the ball, B1 is deemed not to have touched it (Rule 2-11-4). Impetus is from the kick, not from B1's touching (Rule 8-7-1).
- II. Team A's long field goal attempt is first touched when A1 bats the rolling ball backward into nearby B1. **RULING:** Illegal touching by A1. Team B is not deemed to have touched the ball (Rules 2-11-4 and 8-4-2-b).
- III. During a scrimmage kick the untouched ball is at rest on the Team B three-yard line when B22 blocks A80 into the ball, forcing it into the end zone where it touches the ground. **RULING:** The ball is dead when it touches the ground in the end zone. Touchback—Ignore touching by A80 (Rule 2-11-4). By rule, neither team has touched the kicked ball (Rule 8-6-1-b).
- IV. As the punted ball rolls along the ground, punt receiver B22 is blocking A88 to prevent him from downing the ball. The two players are still engaged when the ball bounces into B22's leg. A44 recovers at the B-30. **RULING:** Team A's ball, first and 10 at the B-30. This is not forced touching. Although B22 was in contact with A88 when he touched the ball, this touching was not caused by the contact (Rule 2-11-4). The game clock starts on the snap.
- V. As a punt rolls along the ground A44 blocks B33 into the ball, which bounces away and strikes B48 in the leg. Team A recovers. **RULING:** Team A's ball, first and 10 at the spot of recovery. Although the touching by B33 is forced, that by B48 is not (Rule 2-11-4). B48's touching of the ball allows Team A to recover legally. (Rule 6-3-4-a)

## Touching Ground On or Behind Goal Line—ARTICLE 9

### Approved Ruling 6-3-9

- I. A33 illegally touches a punt and the ball then rolls into Team B's end zone, where Team B recovers and advances the ball into the field of play. **RULING:** The ball is dead when it strikes the ground in the end zone. Team B may choose a touchback or take the ball at the spot of Team A's illegal touching (Rule 4-1-3-c).
- II. A punt goes into Team B's end zone untouched by Team B beyond the neutral zone. Team B commits a personal foul after the ball touches the ground in the end zone. **RULING:** Touchback. Dead-ball foul after the touchback. Team B's ball, first and 10 on the 10-yard line after enforcement of the penalty at Team B's 20.
- III. A Team B player touches a scrimmage kick in flight in Team B's end zone, and Team A downs the ball in the end zone. **RULING:** Team A touchdown (Rules 6-3-3 and 8-2-1-d).

## Loose Behind the Goal Line—ARTICLE 11

### Approved Ruling 6-3-11

- I. Team A snaps at the 50-yard line and punts. The kick is untouched beyond the neutral zone when A88 reaches across Team B's goal line and bats

the ball back into the field of play, and it rolls out of bounds at the B-4. **RULING:** No foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Illegal touching. The spot of the violation is the B-20. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-20.

- II. Team A snaps at the 50-yard line and punts. The kick is untouched beyond the neutral zone when A88 reaches across Team B's goal line and bats the ball back into the field of play. B22 recovers at the B-2 and advances to the B-12 where A66 tackles him by pulling his facemask. **RULING:** No foul for batting in the end zone. Illegal touching. Team B may accept the penalty for the facemask foul, which cancels the illegal touching privilege, and have first and 10 at the B-27.
- III. Team A snaps at the 50-yard line and punts. The kick is untouched beyond the neutral zone when A88 reaches across Team B's goal line and bats the ball back into the field of play. B22 muffs the ball at the B-2 and A43 recovers it at the B-6. While the ball is loose B77 holds A21 at the B-10. **RULING:** Team A may cancel the illegal touching privilege by accepting the holding penalty, which is enforced at the previous spot with the down replayed. Postscrimmage kick rules do not apply to B77's foul since Team B will not next put the ball in play (Rule 10-2-3).
- IV. Team A snaps at the 50-yard line and punts. During the kick, B77 clips at Team B's 25-yard line. The untouched kick is batted backward by Team A out of bounds from the end zone and goes out of bounds on the two-yard line. **RULING:** No foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Illegal touching. B77's clipping foul is governed by postscrimmage kick rules (Rule 10-2-3). Team A will accept the penalty, which cancels the illegal touching privilege. The penalty is enforced at the postscrimmage kick spot, the B-20, half the distance to the goal. Team B's ball at the B-10.
- V. Team A snaps at the 50-yard line and punts. The kick is untouched beyond the neutral zone when A88 reaches across Team B's goal line and bats the ball back into the field of play, and it rolls out of bounds at the B-4. During the kick, A55 blocks below the waist. **RULING:** No foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Illegal touching. The spot of the violation is the B-20. Team B may accept the penalty for blocking below the waist, which is enforced either at the previous spot with the down repeated or at the B-4. If Team B declines the penalty, the illegal touching gives the ball to Team B, first and 10 at the B-20.

### **Out-Of-Bounds Player—ARTICLE 12**

#### **Approved Ruling 6-3-12**

- I. Gunner A88 is running near the sideline to cover a punt when he steps on the sideline and then returns inbounds to continue down the field. He tackles the kick returner at the B-30. **RULING:** Foul by A88 for returning inbounds during the scrimmage kick play. 5-yard penalty. Team B may have the down repeated after the penalty or put the ball in play at the B-35.

### **Fouls by Kicking Team—ARTICLE 13**

#### **Approved Ruling 6-3-13**

- I. Team A punts on fourth and seven at the A-35. At the snap Team A has five players in the backfield. The kick is partially blocked and goes out

- of bounds at the A-45. **RULING:** Foul for illegal formation. Team B may have the ball, first and 10 at the A-40 after the five-yard penalty is enforced at the A-45 (the dead-ball spot) or have the penalty enforced at the previous spot with fourth down repeated at the A-30.
- II. Team A punts on fourth and seven at the A-35. At the snap Team A has five players in the backfield. The kick is partially blocked, does not cross the neutral zone and is returned by B88 to the A-28 where he is tackled. **RULING:** Team B may decline the penalty and have the ball at the A-28 or have the penalty enforced at the previous spot with fourth down repeated at the A-30.
- III. Team A punts on fourth and seven at the A-35. At the snap Team A has five players in the backfield. The kick is partially blocked, crosses the neutral zone, goes back behind the neutral zone and rolls out of bounds at the A-32. **RULING:** Team B may have the ball, first and 10 at the A-27 after the five-yard penalty is enforced at the A-32 (the dead-ball spot) or have the penalty enforced at the previous spot with fourth down repeated at the A-30.
- IV. Fourth and 15 at the A-5. Punter A88 from Team A's end zone kicks the ball. Tackle A77 is flagged for holding in the end zone. Team B returns the ball to the B-45. **RULING:** Team B has the option of having possession after the penalty is enforced at the B-45 or accepting the penalty for a safety. (Rule 10-2-4)

## Defensive Linemen on Scrimmage Kicks—ARTICLE 14

### Approved Ruling 6-3-14

- I. 4/3 @ B-25. Team A is in a formation to attempt a field goal. B50 lines up within one yard of the line of scrimmage and in the gap between the snapper and the guard. B50's shoulder overlaps with the snapper's shoulder. The field goal attempt is good. **RULING:** Live ball foul by B50. Team A may keep the 3 points and decline the penalty or accept the penalty, no score and have 1/10 @ B-20.
- II. 4/6 @ A-24. Team A is in scrimmage kick formation and punts. B50 is lined up inside the frame of the snapper and is within one yard of the line of scrimmage. The punt rolls out of bounds at the B-40. **RULING:** Live ball foul by B50. Team A may accept the penalty and have 4/1 @ A-29 or decline the penalty and it will be Team B's ball, 1/10 @ B-40.
- III. Fourth and 7 at the B-20. Team A is in a formation to attempt a field goal. Defensive linemen B55, B57, and B78 are shoulder to shoulder. B57 is head up on right guard A66 while B55 and B78 are in the gaps on A66's left and right shoulders, respectively. After the ball is snapped all three move forward together. (a) The three make their primary contact against A66; (b) B55 and B57 contact A66, and B78 drives at the right offensive tackle; (c) B57 and B78 make their blocks against A66 but B55 leaps to try to block the kick. **RULING:** (a) Foul. Five-yard penalty. If Team A accepts the penalty they will have fourth and two at the B-15. (b) and (c) No foul. The action by the Team B players does not involve primary contact against a single player, and hence the play is legal.
- IV. Fourth and four at the B-20. Team A is in a formation to attempt a field goal. Team A has five players in the backfield. Defensive linemen B55, B57, and B78 are shoulder to shoulder. B57 is head up on right

guard A66 while B55 and B78 are in the gaps on A66's left and right shoulders, respectively. After the ball is snapped all three move forward together. The three make their primary contact against A66. The holder takes the snap, gets to his feet, and completes a pass to eligible A88 who is tackled at the B-10. **RULING:** Foul by Team A, illegal formation. Foul by Team B, triple team against an offensive lineman. The fouls offset and the down is repeated.

## Section 4. Opportunity to Catch a Kick

### Interference With Opportunity—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 6-4-1

- I. A Team A player catches a free kick very near receiver B25, thus preventing him from making the catch. **RULING:** Kick-catch interference. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul.
- II. A Team B player, about to catch a scrimmage kick, is tackled before the ball arrives but catches the kick while he is falling. **RULING:** Kick-catch interference. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul. Ejection of the Team A player if the contact is flagrant. If the foul is between the goal lines, enforcement is from the spot of the foul and Team B puts the ball in play by a snap; if behind Team B's goal line, award a touchback and penalize from the succeeding spot. The ruling would be the same had the kick been muffed or fumbled. The ruling also applies on an unsuccessful field goal attempt since Team B touched the ball beyond the neutral zone.
- III. While a kick is in flight beyond the neutral zone, A1 is standing or running between the ball and B1. (a) The ball strikes A1 while B1 is in a position to catch the ball. (b) B1, in attempting to catch the ball, bumps into A1. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Kick-catch interference. Penalty—15 yards at the spot of the foul.
- IV. A player of Team B, attempting to catch a kick (no fair catch signal), muffs the ball which is then touched by an opponent who was not interfering with the opportunity of the receiver when he was in position to make the catch. **RULING:** Not interference. In the absence of a fair catch signal, protection against interference with the opportunity to catch a kick ends when any player of Team B muffs the ball.
- V. A Team A player beyond the neutral zone first touches or catches a scrimmage kick that no receiver could have caught while it was in flight. **RULING:** Illegal touching but not interference.
- VI. B25 is standing at the B-35 in position to catch a punt. As the ball is on its downward flight A88 runs by B25 very close to his side, causing B25 to adjust his position before catching the ball. A88 does not make contact and does not penetrate the one-yard area directly in front of B25. **RULING:** Foul by A88, interference with the opportunity to catch the kick. 15 yards, spot of the foul. Even though B25 catches the ball, A88's action causes him to move away from his original location and thus interferes with his opportunity to make the catch.
- VII. B10 signals for a fair catch, muffs the ball and then catches it. **RULING:** If B10 has an opportunity to catch the kick after the muff, he must be

given an unimpeded opportunity to complete the catch. If B10 catches the muffed kick, the ball is dead where he first touched it.

- VIII. Fourth and 10 at the 50-yard line. B17 is at Team B's 20-yard line and in position to catch Team A's high scrimmage kick. During the downward flight of the ball, A37 contacts B17 viciously and flagrantly before he touches the ball. A37 did not alter his speed or make any attempt to elude B17. **RULING:** Team A flagrant personal foul, interference with the opportunity to catch a kick. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul. A37 is ejected.
- IX. Team A's ball, fourth and 10 at the 50-yard line. Team A's windblown scrimmage kick is on its downward flight at Team B's 30-yard line. B18, starting at the 20-yard line, must detour around A92 at the 25-yard line to make the catch at the 30-yard line. **RULING:** Foul by A92 for interference with the opportunity to catch a kick. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul, which is the 25-yard line.
- X. Punt receiver B44 is standing at his 30-yard line in position to catch the kick. Defender A11 races down the field to cover the punt and reaches a point about a foot directly in front of B44 as the ball descends. B44 makes the catch without having to adjust his position or manner of catching the ball because of the presence of A11, who does not pull back to give B44 more room. **RULING:** Foul for kick-catch interference. A11 entered the one-yard area directly in front of receiver B44. 15-yard penalty.
- XI. Punt receiver B22 is at the B-30 awaiting the punt as it makes its downward flight and his teammate B88 is three yards in front of him at the B-33. Down field to cover the kick, A44 legally blocks B88 into B22 just as the ball reaches him. The ball hits B22 in the shoulder and bounces away. Team A recovers at the B-25. **RULING:** Team A's ball, first and 10 at the B-25. This is not kick-catch interference. The action by A44 is against B88 who is not in position to catch the kick, and not against B22. Thus A44 is not deemed to have interfered with B22's opportunity to catch the ball. B22's touching of the ball allows Team A to recover legally.
- XII. Fourth and five at the A-30. Punt receiver B22 is in position to catch the kick at the B-30. He does not signal. A88 is within a yard of B22, at his side, but does not make contact with B22 when he catches the kick at the B-30. B22 is tackled at the B-32. A88's presence does not cause B22 to make any adjustment to his position or his manner of catching the ball. **RULING:** Legal play; no kick-catch interference. A88 is closer than one yard to B22 but is not directly in front of him. He does not affect B22's opportunity to catch the ball. First and 10 for Team B at the B-32.
- XIII. B44 is in position to catch a punt at the B-25. While the ball is still very high in the air and well before it comes close to B44, A88 runs directly in front of B44 within a yard but is not near him when the ball arrives. B44 catches the punt and is tackled. **RULING:** No foul. Although A88 penetrates the one-yard region directly in front of the receiver, this is so early in the action that there is no interference with B44's opportunity to catch the kick.

## Section 5. Fair Catch

### Dead Where Caught—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 6-5-1

- I. After a valid or invalid signal, B1 muffs the punt and B2, who did not signal, catches the kick. **RULING:** The ball is dead when B2 catches it and the ball is placed where B1 first touched it.
- II. B1 has a foot out of bounds when he gives a valid or invalid signal. He then catches the kick inbounds. **RULING:** There is no rule against a receiver going out of bounds during a kick. The inbounds catch is legal, and the ball is dead.
- III. During a free kick, B21 signals for a fair catch at the B-5. B21 muffs the kick but immediately recovers the ball at the B-5. **RULING:** Not a completed Fair Catch. Team B ball, first and 10 at the B-5.

### No Advance—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 6-5-2

- I. B1 gives a fair catch signal before a muff by B2, and then B1 catches or recovers the kick and advances. **RULING:** Because of B1's signal the ball is dead where caught or recovered. Two steps are permitted to enable B1 to come to a stop or to regain balance. A third or subsequent step inbounds is subject to penalty from where the ball is caught or recovered. If B1 is tackled, the tackle is disregarded unless deemed unnecessarily rough or is so late that the tackler should know that there was no intention to advance. If the kick is caught or recovered by Team B in the end zone, it is a touchback. If B1 is tackled before completion of a third step, only the tackler has fouled.
- II. Team A punts. After signaling for a fair catch on his 20-yard line, B1 deliberately lets the ball strike the ground, where B2 recovers the bouncing ball and advances to Team B's 35-yard line. **RULING:** The ball is dead at the spot of recovery. Advance is illegal. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot, the spot of recovery. Team B's ball, first and 10 (Rule 5-2-7).
- III. Punt receiver B22 gives an invalid fair catch signal by a brief flick of his upraised hand. He catches the ball at the B-35 and sprints to the B-40 where he is tackled. **RULING:** The ball is dead where caught. Foul for delay of game by B22; five-yard penalty from the dead-ball spot. No foul by the tackler, as clearly B22 gave the appearance of being a ball carrier. First and 10 for Team B at the B-30.

### Invalid Signals—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 6-5-3

- I. A1 or B1 signals for a fair catch beyond the neutral zone during a kick that does not cross the neutral zone. **RULING:** Any signal by Team A is ignored. Team B may not make a fair catch signal because the ball did not cross the neutral zone. However, the ball is dead when caught or recovered (Rules 2-8-1-a and 4-1-3-g).

- II. On a free kick, B17 makes an invalid signal for fair catch near the sideline, muffs the ball, and it goes out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first and 10 at the hash mark.
- III. A scrimmage kick strikes the ground beyond the neutral zone and bounces high into the air, and B1 signals for a fair catch. **RULING:** Invalid signal. The ball is dead when recovered.
- IV. B1 catches a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone and then signals for a fair catch. **RULING:** Invalid signal. The ball is dead where the signal first was given.
- V. Team A's scrimmage kick is rolling beyond the neutral zone when B17 alerts his teammates to stay away from the ball by a "get away" signal. **RULING:** Invalid signal. The ball is dead by rule when either team recovers.
- VI. While a free kick is in the air, B21 gives a waving signal that does not meet all the requirements of a valid fair catch signal. The ball is caught by: (a) B21 at the B-5; or (b) B44 at the B-5. **RULING:** The ball is dead when caught. (a) Team B ball, first and 10 at the 25-yard line; (b) Team B ball, first and 10 at the 5-yard line.

### Illegal Block or Contact—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 6-5-4

- I. B1 gives either a valid or invalid fair catch signal and does not touch a punt. While the untouched ball is loose in the field of play, he blocks an opponent (a) in the field of play beyond the neutral zone or (b) in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** (a) If the ball crosses the neutral zone and Team B has possession when the down ends, Team B is penalized 10 yards from the postscrimmage kick enforcement spot. (b) Safety. The ruling is the same on an unsuccessful field goal attempt.
- II. B1 signals at the 50-yard line and does not touch a punt. While the ball is rolling on the ground at Team B's 45-yard line, B1 uses his hands to shove an opponent to get to the ball and the ball is declared dead in Team B's possession. **RULING:** Penalty—10 yards, postscrimmage kick enforcement. The ball belongs to Team B (Rule 10-2-3).

### No Tackling—ARTICLE 5

#### Approved Ruling 6-5-5

- I. B1 and B2 each signal. B1 muffs, and B2 is about to catch the muffed ball when A1 grabs and pulls him to the ground. **RULING:** Not interference, but holding. Penalty—10 yards from the previous spot or from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.
- II. B22 makes a fair catch and is tackled before he has carried the ball more than two steps. **RULING:** Foul by the tackler. Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot.
- III. B1 catches the punt after B3 signals for a fair catch. **RULING:** The ball is dead when and where caught. B1 is not entitled to catch protection but is entitled to the same protection he has after any other dead ball (Rule 6-5-1-d).



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# RULE 7

## Snapping and Passing the Ball

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### Section 1. The Scrimmage

#### Shift and False Start —ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 7-1-2

- I. After a huddle or shift, all Team A players come to a stop and remain stationary for one second. Then, before the snap, two or more simultaneously change their positions. **RULING:** All 11 Team A players must again stop for one second before the snap, otherwise it is a live-ball foul at the snap for an illegal shift. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot (Rule 2-22-1).
- II. Ten Team A players shift while A1 remains stationary. A1 then starts moving backward before one second elapses and the ball is snapped. **RULING:** If A1, who moved, did not halt with the other Team A players for one second before the snap, it is a dead-ball foul at the snap for a false start. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- III. After the Team A players have stopped for one second, end A88 runs wide and stops, and before one second elapses, back A36 starts moving backward. **RULING:** Legal. But if back A36 starts before end A88 stops, the simultaneous movement of two players constitutes a shift, and all Team A players must be stationary for one second before the snap (Rule 2-22-1).
- IV. 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: Illegal shift that converts to a false start. Team A never satisfied the one-second rule before the snap. Officials should shut the play down and penalize Team A five yards.
- V. Team A has 3rd and 3 at the B-40. QB A12 is in shotgun formation, (a) makes a fake clap standing in position; (b) makes a fake clap while chucking his shoulders and hands forward in an exaggerated motion simulating the start of the play. **RULING:** Rule 7-1-2-b-4-c states that it is a false start if the quarterback makes any quick, jerky movement that simulates the start of the play. In (a) no foul; (b) false start on A12.

#### Offensive Team Requirements—Prior to the Snap—ARTICLE 3

##### Approved Ruling 7-1-3

- I. A21 is legally on the end of the line of scrimmage next to A88, who is in a three-point stance. Team A stops for one second while A21 and A88 are in

the above positions, and then A21 moves to a legal backfield position and stops. Then A88 moves to a wider position on the line. **RULING:** Legal if both A21 and A88 are stationary at the snap (Rules 2-22-1 and 7-1-4).

- II. A21 is legally on the end of the line of scrimmage next to A88, who is in the stance of a restricted lineman. Team A has stopped for one second when A21 leaves the line of scrimmage and goes in motion into the backfield. A88 moves to a wider position on the line. **RULING:** A88 may break his three-point stance since he is now on the end of the line of scrimmage, but Team A must stop again for one second before the snap to make the play legal (Rule 7-1-4).
- III. B71 crosses the neutral zone into the Team A backfield and does not threaten any Team A player. A23, legally in the backfield, intentionally reaches to contact B71. **RULING:** Team A foul, false start. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- IV. Snapper A1 lifts or moves the ball forward before moving it backward to start the snap. B2 bats the ball, causing it to roll loose with B3 recovering. **RULING:** Team A foul, illegal snap, ball remains dead. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 4-1-1).
- V. A66, a restricted lineman between the snapper and the player on the end of the line, or A72, a restricted player on the end of the line of scrimmage:
  1. Lifts a hand or hands from the ground immediately when threatened by B1, who is in the neutral zone. **RULING:** Blow the whistle immediately. Team B dead-ball foul, offside. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
  2. Lifts a hand or hands from the ground upon initial charge by B1, who (a) does not enter the neutral zone or (b) enters the neutral zone but does not threaten the position of A66 or A72. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), blow the whistle immediately. Team A dead ball foul, false start. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.

*Note: Before the snap, a Team B player who enters the neutral zone may threaten a maximum of three Team A linemen. If the Team B player enters the neutral zone directly toward a Team A lineman, then that Team A player and the two adjacent linemen are considered to be threatened. If the Team B player enters the neutral zone toward a gap between two Team A linemen, then only those two Team A players are considered to be threatened.*

- VI. A80 on the end of the line, a nonrestricted interior lineman or a back, misses the snap count and makes a casual movement that is not abrupt, quick or jerky and does not simulate the start of a play. **RULING:** No foul by Team A.

### **Offensive Team Requirements—At the Snap—ARTICLE 4**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-1-4**

- I. A30, lined up legally as a back, starts in motion legally. He then turns so that he still is legally in motion but is facing his line of scrimmage using a “side-step” motion. At the snap, A30 is bent slightly forward at the waist and is either continuing his “side-step” motion or is “marking time” in place. **RULING:** Legal.

- II. A30, lined up legally as a back, starts in motion legally. He then turns so that he still is legally in motion but is facing his line of scrimmage using a “side-step” motion. At the snap, A30, still behind the neutral zone, is moving slightly forward from the waist up or his “side-step” motion has veered slightly toward the line of scrimmage. **RULING:** Live-ball foul at the snap for illegal motion. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.
- III. Team A’s formation at the snap includes only 10 players: five players on the line of scrimmage numbered 50-79, one player on the line wearing number 82, and four players in the backfield. **RULING:** The formation is legal because Team A has no more than four players in the backfield and the required number of players (five) on the line wearing 50-79.
- IV. Team A, with fourth and eight, sends two substitutes numbered 21 and 33 into the game as exceptions to the mandatory numbering, and they are positioned legally on their line of scrimmage between the end players on the line of scrimmage. After the ball is snapped, a Team A player, 15 yards deep in a scrimmage kick formation, throws a legal forward pass to an eligible receiver for a 10-yard gain. **RULING:** Legal play (Note: The same play from a field goal formation is legal).
- V. A33, an exception to the mandatory numbering rule, assumes a position on the line of scrimmage next to end A88. Before the snap, A88 moves to a backfield position and the flanker on the opposite side of the line moves to an end position on the line. **RULING:** Illegal formation. Since A33 is now an end, he is thus in an illegal position at the snap (live-ball foul). Penalty—five yards, previous spot.
- VI. A33, an exception to the mandatory numbering rule, assumes a position on the line of scrimmage to the left of snapper A85, who is on the end of the line. All other Team A players on the line are to A33’s left. After a one-second stop, all players on the line except A85 legally shift to the other side of the ball, with A33 now positioned as an end. **RULING:** If the ball is snapped with A33 in this position, it is a foul for an illegal formation. A33 may not legally be on the end of the line at the snap. Penalty—five yards, previous spot.
- VII. At the B-45, Team A is in an alignment in which the snapper A88 is on the right end of the line. The linemen on his left are numbered 56, 63, 72, 22, 79, and 25. There are four players in the backfield. A44 is ten yards directly behind the snapper, and the other backs are to his left a few yards behind the line of scrimmage. No player is in position to hold for a place kick. After the snap, A44 completes a pass to snapper A88 for a touchdown. This happens on (a) first or second down; (b) third or fourth down. **RULING:** Because there are only four offensive linemen numbered in the 50-79 range, the legality of the play depends on whether Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation. One of the requirements for such a formation is that “it is obvious that a kick will be attempted.” (a) Illegal formation: on first or second down, a team is very unlikely to punt, so it is not obvious that a kick will be attempted. (b) Legal play: touchdown. On third or fourth down a team may be likely to kick. (Rule 2-16-10)
- VIII. Team A lines up with A11 ten yards directly behind the snapper. The other three backs are split wide, all outside the tackle box. Only four Team A linemen have uniform numbers between 50 and 79. A11 receives the

backward pass from the snapper with Team A in this formation. **RULING:** Live-ball foul. Illegal formation, not enough players numbered 50-79 on the line of scrimmage. Team A is not in a scrimmage kick formation, because in this alignment it is not obvious that a kick will be attempted. (Rule 2-16-10)

- IX. Team A lines up with six players on the line of scrimmage, five of whom are numbered in the range 50-79. A seventh player, A88, is in the normal location of an end, but he is positioned so that his feet and shoulders are clearly at a 45-degree angle with the line of scrimmage. The other four players are clearly in the backfield. The ball is snapped with Team A in this alignment. **RULING:** Live-ball foul, illegal formation. Every Team A player must be either a lineman or a back; A88 is neither.

### **Defensive Team Requirements—ARTICLE 5**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-1-5**

- I. Snapper A1 lifts the ball before passing it backward, B2 bats the ball away, and B3 recovers the ball. **RULING:** Team A dead-ball foul, illegal snap. The ball remains dead because it was not put in play by a legal snap. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. Team A retains possession.
- II. Snapper A1 legally begins the snap, but B2 bats the ball before A1 completes the snap, and B3 recovers the ball. **RULING:** Team B foul and the ball remains dead. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. Team B may not touch the ball until it has been snapped. Team A retains possession.
- III. Before the snap, a Team B player crosses the neutral zone and, without making contact, continues his charge behind a Team A lineman and directly toward the quarterback or kicker. **RULING:** A Team B player who is on Team A's side of the neutral zone and is moving in a direct path toward the quarterback or kicker while he is behind an offensive lineman is considered to be interfering with Team A's formation. Penalty—Team B dead-ball foul, offside. Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- IV. Linebacker B56 is stationary within one yard beyond the neutral zone. As the offense is calling its snap signals, B56 feints toward the line in an obvious attempt to induce a false start by the offense. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul, delay of game. Five-yard penalty at the succeeding spot.

### **Handing the Ball Forward—ARTICLE 6**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-1-6**

- I. Eligible receiver A83 is on the end of his scrimmage line and adjacent to the snapper in an unbalanced "T" formation. Quarterback A10 receives a handed snap and immediately conveys the ball to A83. **RULING:** If the movement of the ball is forward and it left A10's hand before having been touched by A83, it is a legal forward pass. A83 may have turned sufficiently to receive a backward pass or handoff (legal); but if the action immediately followed the snap, it is not likely that a handoff would have had time to comply with the "turn" and "two yards behind the line" requirement.

## Section 2. Backward Pass and Fumble

### Out of Bounds—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 7-2-4

- I. B20 intercepts a legal forward pass (a) in his end zone, (b) on his three-yard line, and his momentum carries him into his end zone, or (c) in the field of play and retreats into his end zone (no momentum). In each instance, B20 fumbles in the end zone and the ball rolls forward and out of bounds on Team B's two-yard line. **RULING:** The ball belongs to Team B at the spot of the fumble (Team B's end zone); (a) touchback, (b) Team B's ball at the three-yard line, and (c) safety (Rules 8-5-1 and 8-6-1).
- II. On second down, A1 fumbles the ball, which strikes the ground and bounces high in the air. B2 receives the ball while off the ground and returns to the ground out of bounds (a) in advance of the spot of the fumble or (b) behind the spot of the fumble. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball at the spot of the fumble. (b) Team A's ball at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline (Rules 4-2-4-d and 7-2-4).

## Section 3. Forward Pass

### Illegal Forward Pass—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 7-3-2

- I. Quarterback A10, who is not outside the tackle box and is attempting to save yardage, intentionally throws a desperation forward pass that falls incomplete where there is no eligible Team A receiver. **RULING:** Intentional grounding. Penalty—Loss of down at the spot of the foul. The clock starts on the snap (Rule 3-3-2-d-4) unless Rule 3-4-4 applies.
- II. Late in either half with more than one minute remaining, A10 is unable to locate an open receiver. To conserve time, he throws a forward pass that is incomplete where there is no eligible Team A player. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass, intentional grounding. Penalty—Loss of down at the spot of the foul. The clock will start on the ready-for-play signal (Rule 3-3-2-e-14 and 3-4-3).
- III. On third down near the end of either half, potential field goal holder A4 muffs the snap and A4 or potential kicker A3 recovers the ball and immediately throws it forward to the ground. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass for intentional grounding; not a valid attempt to conserve time. Penalty—Loss of down at the spot of the foul. 10-second runoff option for Team B (Rule 3-4-4). Clock starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rules 3-3-2-e-14 and 3-4-3) if the 10-second runoff is accepted.
- IV. The ball is snapped over the head of quarterback A12, who is in the "shotgun" formation. A12 recovers the ball and immediately throws it forward to the ground. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass for intentional grounding; not a valid attempt to conserve time. Penalty—Loss of down at the spot of the foul. Clock starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rules 3-3-2-e-14 and 3-4-3).
- V. On third down near the end of the half, A1 muffs the snap. A1 or A4 catches the muffed ball and immediately throws it forward into the ground. **RULING:** Legal play.

- VI. On third down near the end of the half, A1—positioned seven yards behind the snapper—catches the snap and immediately throws the ball forward to the ground. **RULING:** Legal play.
- VII. With seconds remaining in a half and the ball ready for play, Team A quickly lines up and the ball is legally snapped to quarterback A12, who throws the ball forward directly to the ground. Team A's formation was not legal at the snap. When the ball becomes dead, two seconds show on the game clock. **RULING:** Illegal formation. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot. The clock starts on the snap.
- VIII. Quarterback A10 sprints toward a sideline and is outside the tackle box when he throws a legal forward pass that is batted down by a defensive lineman and lands behind the neutral zone. **RULING:** Legal play. Without the batting the ball would have landed beyond the neutral zone, so A10 has satisfied the spirit of the rule.
- IX. Third and 5 at the A-40. QB A12 drops back in the pocket to pass. Under a heavy rush he throws a backward pass to back A22 who carries the ball outside the tackle box. About to be tackled, A22 at the A-35 throws a forward pass that crosses the neutral zone and lands in an area 20 yards away from the nearest Team A eligible receiver. **RULING:** Foul, intentional grounding. The tackle-box rule exception applies only to the player who controls the snap or the resulting backward pass. Loss of down at the spot of the foul. Fourth and 10 at the A-35. (Rule 7-3-2-h-Exc.)
- X. Quarterback A12 is in a shotgun formation. He muffs the backward pass from the snapper and the ball is picked up by A63 inside the tackle box. Under a heavy rush, A63 gets outside the tackle box and throws the ball incomplete beyond the line of scrimmage. **RULING:** Legal play. A63 controlled the backward pass that resulted from the snap. (Rule 7-3-2-h-Exc.)
- XI. 2/10 @ A-40. In a shotgun formation A11 takes the backward pass from the snapper and hands the ball off to back A44. A44 takes a few steps toward the line of scrimmage and then throws a backward pass to A11, who is still inside the tackle box. Avoiding tacklers, A11 scrambles outside the tackle box, and unable to find an open receiver, at the A-35 he throws the ball toward an area where there are no eligible receivers, and it lands out of bounds beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass. Loss of down at the A-35; third and 15. A11 loses the right to throw the ball away legally because he relinquishes possession before passing it.
- XII. 3/10 @ A-30. Quarterback A11 drops back to pass. About to be tackled at the A-20, he throws the ball forward to an area where there are no eligible receivers. Tackle A77 catches the pass at the A-28 and is tackled at the A-32. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass; loss of down at the spot of the pass. Fourth and 20 at the A-20. This is "intentional grounding" since A11 throws the ball into an area where there are no eligible Team A receivers. Note that this is not illegal touching by A77, because the rule for illegal touching applies only to a legal forward pass. (Rule 7-3-11)
- XIII. Quarterback A11 drops back to pass and scrambles outside the tackle box. He fumbles the ball, which bounces back up into his hands. He then passes the ball forward, and it lands beyond the neutral zone in an open area

where there are no eligible receivers with an opportunity to make a catch.

**RULING:** Legal play, since A11 did not relinquish possession to another player.

### **Eligibility Lost by Going Out of Bounds—ARTICLE 4**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-3-4**

- I. Eligible A88 voluntarily goes out of bounds, returns inbounds, and is the first player to touch the legal forward pass. This touching by A88 occurs in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Illegal touching. Penalty—Loss of down at the previous spot.
- II. Eligible A88 voluntarily goes out of bounds during a down in which a legal forward pass is thrown. He returns to the field of play inbounds but does not touch the ball and is held by an opponent before the ball is touched by any player. **RULING:** Not pass interference—A88 is not eligible to catch a legal forward pass. Penalty—Ten yards from the previous spot. Repeat the down.
- III. Wide receiver A88 is blocked out of bounds by B1 and then runs 20 yards before returning inbounds to the field of play. A88 catches a legal pass in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Foul for illegal touching due to A88's failure to return inbounds immediately. Penalty—Loss of down at the previous spot.
- IV. Eligible receiver A44 is running a pass pattern near the sideline. As a legal forward pass comes toward him, he accidentally steps on the sideline, leaps, muffs the pass into the air while airborne, returns to the ground inbounds, grabs the ball and lands on his knees inbounds with the ball firmly in his possession. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. A44 first touched the ball while airborne and thus out of bounds since he had not established in bounds. (Rule 2-27-15)

### **Eligibility Gained or Regained—ARTICLE 5**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-3-5**

- I. Team B touches the legal forward pass near a sideline while originally eligible A1 is out of bounds. A1 comes inbounds and touches the pass. **RULING:** Legal play. Touching by Team B made all players eligible during the remainder of the down.

### **Completed Pass—ARTICLE 6**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-3-6**

- I. Two opposing players receive a legal forward pass while both are off the ground, and both players return to the ground inbounds at the same time. **RULING:** Simultaneous catch; the ball is awarded to the passing team (Rule 2-4-4).
- II. Two opposing players receive a ball while both are off the ground, and one player returns to the ground inbounds before the other. **RULING:** No simultaneous catch. The legal forward pass is completed or intercepted by the player who first returned to the ground (Rule 2-4-4).
- III. An inbounds airborne player receives a legal forward pass. While still in the air, he is tackled by an opponent and obviously held for a moment before being carried in any direction. He then lands inbounds or out of bounds

- with the ball. **RULING:** Completed pass. The ball is dead at the yard line where the receiver/interceptor was held in a manner that prevented him from immediately returning to the ground (Rule 4-1-3-p).
- IV. Airborne A80 receives a legal forward pass at his 30-yard line. While still in the air, he is tackled by B40 and driven forward to Team A's 34-yard line, where he is downed. **RULING:** Team A's ball at its 34-yard line (Rule 5-1-3-a).
- V. Airborne A80 receives a legal forward pass at his 30-yard line. While still in the air, he is tackled by B40 and driven backward to Team A's 26-yard line, where the ball becomes dead. **RULING:** Team A's ball at the 30-yard line (Rule 5-1-3-a Exception).
- VI. A86 is legally blocked out of bounds by B18 at Team B's two-yard line. A86, while attempting an immediate return to the field of play, leaps from out of bounds and is airborne as he receives A16's legal forward pass. He lands in Team B's end zone with the ball in his grasp. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. A86 did not establish in bounds before touching the pass, and hence he was still out of bounds. (Rule 2-27-15)
- VII. B33 leaps from in bounds and is airborne as he receives Team A's legal forward pass. He completes the interception by landing (a) in the field of play or (b) in Team B's end zone, and is then tackled. **RULING:** B33 is a ball carrier until he loses player possession or the ball becomes dead by rule. (a) First and 10 for Team B. (b) Touchback. (Rules 4-1-3-c, 4-2-3-a, 5-1-1-e and 7-3-4).
- VIII. While airborne and in bounds, eligible receiver A89 touches a forward pass when he propels it toward: (a) eligible receiver A80, who catches the pass; or (b) B27, who intercepts the pass. **RULING:** Legal play, and the ball remains live in both (a) and (b). A89 has batted a forward pass (Rules 2-4-3, 2-11-3 and 9-4-1-a).
- IX. Airborne receiver A85 grasps a forward pass 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 A85 hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and touches the ground. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. An airborne receiver must maintain control of the ball while going to the ground in the process of completing a catch.
- X. Airborne receiver A85 grasps a forward pass 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 A85 hitting the ground, the ball comes loose but never touches the ground before he regains 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.
- XI. Airborne receiver A85 grasps a forward pass and in the process of going to the ground, first contacts the ground with his left foot inbounds as he falls to the ground out of bounds. Immediately upon A85 hitting the ground out of bounds, the ball comes loose. **RULING:** Incomplete pass regardless of whether or not the ball hits the ground because the receiver is out of bounds.



- XII. Receiver A85 stretches out at the Team B two-yard line and grasps a forward pass and 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.
- XIII. Receiver A85 is airborne and in bounds in the end zone and grasps a forward pass, but while airborne he is hit by a defender, which causes A85 to fall to the ground. Immediately upon A85 hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and strikes the ground. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. An airborne receiver contacted before completing all the requirements of a catch must still maintain control of the ball after hitting the ground.
- XIV. Eligible A80 is airborne when he receives a legal forward pass. He grasps the ball firmly in his hands, and as he is returning toward the ground, the nose of the football touches the ground before any part of his body. A80 retains his firm control of the ball and it does not move during this action. A80's knees then touch the ground and he maintains control of the ball. **RULING:** Completed pass.
- XV. Eligible A80 is airborne near the sideline when he receives a legal forward pass. As he comes to the ground facing the field of play, his toe (a) clearly drags the ground inbounds before he falls out of bounds; (b) touches the ground inbounds and then his heel comes down on the sideline in a continuous motion. He maintains firm control of the ball in both cases. **RULING:** (a) Complete pass. (b) Incomplete pass. The continuous toe-heel touching is part of a single process and by interpretation he has landed out of bounds, thus not executing a catch.

### **Incomplete Pass—ARTICLE 7**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-3-7**

- I. A player touches a legal forward pass (a) while he is contacting a boundary line; (b) while airborne after having leaped from out of bounds. **RULING:** (a) and (b) The ball is out of bounds, the pass is incomplete, and the down counts. The player loses his eligibility when he goes out of bounds (Rules 2-27-15, 4-2-3-a, and 7-3-3).
- II. Fourth and nine on Team A's six-yard line. A1 intentionally grounds a forward pass in his end zone to save loss of yardage. **RULING:** Team B may accept the penalty for a safety. If they decline the penalty, it is Team B's ball, first and goal on the six-yard line.
- III. Third and nine on Team A's six-yard line. A1 throws a second forward pass from his end zone. B2 intercepts and is downed on Team A's 20-yard line. **RULING:** Team B may accept the penalty which results in a safety, or take the result of the play, retaining the ball for a first down on Team A's 20-yard line.

### **Illegal Contact and Pass Interference—ARTICLE 8**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-3-8**

- I. B33, defending against a legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone, has his back to the ball and is waving his arms in the face of eligible A88, but

does not make contact. **RULING:** No foul. There is no foul for defensive pass interference if there is no contact.

- II. Wide receiver A80, 15 yards beyond the neutral zone, turns his back toward the neutral zone. The passer throws the ball high over A80's hands, which are extended above his head. The ball is overthrown and beyond the receiver (uncatchable pass) when B2 pulls A80 down by the facemask. **RULING:** Personal foul (Rule 9-1-12-a), not pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. First and 10 for Team A. Flagrant offenders shall be ejected.
- III. A83, a wide receiver 10 yards from the nearest interior lineman, slants toward the middle of the field. Before the ball is thrown, B1, a back, legally blocks him and knocks him down. **RULING:** Legal unless the block was below the waist (Rule 9-1-6).
- IV. At the snap, A88 is on the end of the line of scrimmage 10 yards from the tackle position and A44 is in the backfield, four yards to his inside. Just before the Team A passer releases the ball, A88 contacts B1 five yards beyond the neutral zone. The pass is thrown to A44, who has moved in front and to the outside of the spot where A88 had contacted B1. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- V. Before the ball is thrown, wide receiver A88 moves four yards downfield directly toward and in front of the defender, B1. At this spot, B1 pushes A88, who then uses his hands to contact B1. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference, if the legal forward pass is beyond the neutral zone. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- VI. Before the ball is thrown, wide receiver A88 slants to the inside where linebacker B1 attempts to block him. A88 uses his hands to shove B1 away. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference, if the legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone. If B1's initial contact was below the waist and beyond the neutral zone, Team B also has fouled and the live-ball fouls offset.
- VII. A88, a spread receiver, runs a 10-yard route and cuts 90 degrees to the sideline. After the ball is thrown, B2 contacts A88 with a tackle, block, grasp or push before A88 touches the ball, a catchable forward pass. **RULING:** Team B foul, defensive pass interference. Penalty—Spot foul and first down.
- VIII. A80, a tight end, runs 10 yards into the secondary and cuts toward the goal posts. B1 is one step behind and to the outside when he recovers. After the legal forward pass has been thrown, B1 contacts A80 with a tackle, block, grasp or push as the ball goes over A80's outstretched hands. **RULING:** Team B foul for defensive pass interference. Penalty—Spot foul and a first down if the infraction occurs less than 15 yards from the previous spot; 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and a first down if the foul is more than 15 yards beyond the neutral zone.
- IX. A88 and B2 are running closely together before or after the ball has been thrown. Either A88 or B2 or both fall when their feet become entangled. Neither player was tripped intentionally. **RULING:** No foul.

- X. Before the pass is thrown, wide receiver A88 and defender B1 are running shoulder to shoulder and side by side 15 yards beyond the neutral zone. A88 is nearest to the sideline, and B1 is nearest to the hash mark. A88 breaks to the inside. B1 does not move, and A88 collides with him. **RULING:** No foul because the ball has not been thrown.
- XI. Wide receiver A88 and defender B1 are running shoulder to shoulder and side by side 15 yards beyond the neutral zone. A88 is nearest to the sideline, and B1 is nearest to the hash mark. A legal forward pass is thrown toward the goal post. While the ball is in the air, A88 breaks to the inside toward the catchable forward pass. B1 does not move and makes no attempt to go for the pass, and A88 collides with him. **RULING:** Team B foul, defensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot and a first down.
- XII. A44, a slot back, runs a pattern 25 yards downfield toward the goal line pylon. B1, a safety, is positioned between A44 and the pylon when the ball is thrown. B1 obviously reduces his speed and collides with A44 before the catchable ball touches the ground. **RULING:** Team B foul, defensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot and first down.
- XIII. A80, a tight end, moves across the formation on a pass pattern at a depth of 25 yards where he contacts B1, a safety, before or after the ball has been thrown. A88, a wide receiver positioned on the opposite side from the tight end at the snap, crosses behind the contact of A80 and B1 and catches the legal forward pass. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- XIV. Fourth and goal for Team A on Team B's five-yard line. Team A's legal forward pass is incomplete, but Team B interfered on its one-yard line or in its end zone. **RULING:** First and goal for Team A on Team B's two-yard line.
- XV. A80 and B60 are attempting to catch a forward pass thrown toward A80's position, which is beyond the neutral zone. The pass is high and ruled uncatchable. As the ball passes overhead, A80 pushes B60 in the chest. **RULING:** Not offensive pass interference.
- XVI. On a legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone, A80 and B60 are attempting to catch the pass thrown to A80's position. A14, who is not attempting to catch the pass, blocks B65 downfield, either before the pass is thrown or while the uncatchable pass is in flight. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.

## **Contact Interference—ARTICLE 9**

### **Approved Ruling 7-3-9**

- I. A legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone is tipped or muffed by an eligible receiver of either team or glances off an official. Then, while the pass is still in flight, either Team A or Team B holds or otherwise fouls an eligible opponent who is beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Interference rules do not apply after the pass has been touched. Penalize as a foul during a loose ball. Penalty—10 or 15 yards from the previous spot (Rule 9-3-6).
- II. On a legal forward pass behind the neutral zone, eligible A1 "has position" on B1 and is about to touch the pass when B1 pushes A1 and the pass is

incomplete. **RULING:** Legal. Interference rules do not apply behind the neutral zone (Rules 7-3-9-d, 9-1-5 Exception 4 and 9-3-6 Exception 5).

- III. Running a pattern near the sideline, end A88 touches the sideline just before a defender jumps into him and bats the ball to the ground. **RULING:** Not defensive pass interference. A88 became ineligible when he stepped out of bounds. (Rule 7-3-3)

### Ineligible Receiver Downfield—ARTICLE 10

#### Approved Ruling 7-3-10

- I. Ineligible lineman A70 runs more than three yards beyond the neutral zone and does not make contact with an opponent. He circles toward the flank and returns across the neutral zone before A10 throws a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone. **RULING:** Ineligible downfield. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.
- II. Ineligible lineman A70 makes contact with an opponent within one yard of the neutral zone. A70 drives B4 more than three yards beyond the neutral zone and then circles back across the neutral zone before A1 throws a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot (Rule 7-3-8-b).
- III. First and 10 at the A-37. Ineligible lineman A70 releases at the snap and starts downfield. When the passer releases the ball, the top of A70's helmet is penetrating the plane of the A-40. The pass crosses the neutral zone and falls incomplete at the A-39. **RULING:** Foul, ineligible receiver downfield. Some part of A70's body was more than three yards beyond the neutral zone when the pass was released.

### Illegal Touching—ARTICLE 11

#### Approved Ruling 7-3-11

- I. Late in the half, quarterback A10, who has not been outside the tackle box, throws a desperation pass to intentionally save yardage that falls incomplete after ineligible A58 touches the ball in an attempt to catch it. **RULING:** Foul for intentional grounding. No foul for illegal touching since the pass is illegal. Penalty—Loss of down at the spot of the pass. The clock starts on the snap (Rules 3-3-2-d-4 and 7-3-2-h). Rule 3-4-4 applies if less than one minute remains on the game clock. If time expires in the quarter the quarter is not extended.
- II. Team A snaps on its 10-yard line. A10 retreats and then passes forward to ineligible A70 who, while in his end zone, (a) touches the ball as he attempts to catch the pass, and the pass is incomplete; (b) catches the pass and is downed in the end zone; or (c) catches the pass and is downed after having advanced to his three-yard line. **RULING:** (a) Team B may accept the five-yard penalty from the previous spot that includes loss of down, so the down will count. (b) The ball is dead in the end zone with impetus by Team A, and Team B may elect the safety or the penalty at the previous spot with loss of down. (c) Five-yard penalty from the previous spot and loss of down. The down counts if the penalty is declined; the dead-ball spot might be deemed more advantageous to Team B than the penalty [Note: (a), (b) and (c) could be intentional grounding depending on the

location of an eligible Team A player or the location of A10 when the ball is thrown] (Rule 10-1-1-b). If intentional grounding is warranted, there is no illegal touching.]

### **Team B Personal Foul/Unsportsmanlike Conduct During Legal Forward Pass Play--ARTICLE 12**

#### **Approved Ruling 7-3-12**

- I. A11 throws a forward pass intended for A88. During the play defensive end B88 is flagged for a head-slap to tackle A79. The pass to A88 is (a) complete for a 10-yard gain to the A-30 where A88 is tackled. (b) incomplete or intercepted. **RULING:** (a) The penalty is enforced at the end of the run, which is the A-30; first and 10 for Team A at the A-45. (b) The penalty is enforced at the previous spot, first and 10 for Team A at the A-35. (Rule 9-1 Penalty)
- II. A11 throws a forward pass intended for A88. During the pass defensive end B88 is flagged for a unsportsmanlike conduct. The pass to A88 is (a) complete for a 10-yard gain to the A-30 where A88 is tackled. (b) incomplete or intercepted. **RULING:** (a) The penalty is enforced at the end of the run, which is the A-30; first and 10 for Team A at the A-45. (b) The penalty is enforced at the previous spot, first and 10 for Team A at the A-35. (Rule 9-2-1-a-1 Penalty)

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# RULE 8

## Scoring

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### Section 2. Touchdown

#### How Scored—ARTICLE 1

##### Approved Ruling 8-2-1

- I. Ball carrier A1, while attempting to score, strikes the pylon located on the right intersection of the goal line and sideline with his foot. He is carrying the ball in his right arm, which is extended over the sideline. **RULING:** Whether or not a touchdown is scored depends on the forward progress of the ball as related to the goal line when the ball becomes dead by rule (Rules 4-2-4-d and 5-1-3-a).
- II. Ball carrier A1, advancing in the field of play, becomes airborne at the two-yard line. His first contact with the ground is out of bounds three yards beyond the goal line. The ball, in possession of the ball carrier, passes over the pylon. **RULING:** Touchdown (Rule 4-2-4-d).
- III. The ball, in possession of airborne ball carrier A21, crosses the sideline above the one-yard line, continues beyond the pylon and is then declared dead out of bounds in possession of A21. **RULING:** Ball is declared out of bounds at the one-yard line (Rules 2-12-1 and 4-2-4-d).
- IV. Quarterback A12 completes a forward pass to a teammate who is standing in Team B's end zone. (a) A12 is beyond the neutral zone when he releases the ball. (b) The receiver is wearing uniform number 73. **RULING:** In (a) and (b) the result of the play is a touchdown. The penalty is completed according to Team B's options.
- V. Ball carrier A22 dives for the goal line at the B-1. The ball in his possession (a) touches the pylon; (b) goes over the top of the pylon; (c) crosses the goal line inside the pylon. A22 then first contacts the ground out of bounds three yards beyond the goal line. **RULING:** (a), (b) and (c) Touchdown in all three. The ball in A22's possession has broken the plane of the goal line in all three scenarios.
- VI. Ball carrier A22 heads for the right-hand pylon at the goal line. At the B-2 he dives or is blocked into the air by an opponent. The ball in A22's right hand crosses the sideline at the B-1 and passes outside the pylon, and then A22 (a) touches the pylon with his foot or left hand; (b) first touches the ground out of bounds three yards beyond the goal line. **RULING:** (a) Touchdown. The goal-line plane is extended since A22 touches the pylon. (b) Not a touchdown. The goal-line plane is not extended because A22 did not touch either the pylon or the ground in the end zone. The ball is ruled out of bounds at the B-1.

- VII. Ball carrier A22 heads for the right-hand pylon at the goal line. The ball in his right hand crosses the extension of the goal line outside (i.e., to the right of) the pylon, and then A22 steps (a) on the goal line; (b) on the sideline inches short of the goal line. **RULING:** (a) Touchdown. The goal-line plane is extended because A22 touches the ground in the end zone. (b) Not a touchdown. The goal-line plane is not extended. The ball is ruled out of bounds at the crossing point.
- VIII. Ball carrier A22 heads for the right-hand pylon at the goal line. The ball is in his right hand. His foot hits the pylon just before the ball crosses (a) the pylon or (b) the extension of the goal line just to the right (outside) of the pylon. **RULING:** (a) and (b) No touchdown in either case. Because the pylon is out of bounds the ball is dead when A22's foot hits it. Thus in both cases the ball is dead before it crosses the goal line.
- IX. Ball carrier A1 is hit and his forward progress stopped inbounds near the goal line at the sideline to his right. When he is stopped he has the ball in his right hand extended beyond the goal line (a) inside the pylon; (b) outside the pylon. **RULING:** (a) Touchdown. The ball became dead when he extended it beyond the goal-line plane. (b) Not a touchdown, because no part of his body touches either the pylon or the end zone. In this case the goal-line plane is not extended.
- X. Ball carrier A33 is running toward the Team B goal line. A33 drops the ball at the one-yard line, circles through the end zone and runs to the team area, believing a touchdown has been scored. There is no touchdown signal by any official. The fumbled ball hits the ground just outside the goal line, rolls along the ground in the end zone, and is declared dead there when it comes to rest and no player attempts to recover it. **RULING:** When a fumble comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure the ball in advance of the spot of the fumble, the ball belongs to the fumbling team at the spot of the fumble. Team A's ball at the 1-yard line.

### Section 3. Try Down

#### How Scored—ARTICLE 1

##### Approved Ruling 8-3-1

- I. During a try, after having obtained possession, Team B fumbles and Team A recovers in the Team B end zone. **RULING:** Team B can fumble after intercepting a pass, catching or recovering a fumble or recovering a backward pass. Touchdown. Award Team A two points (Rule 8-3-2-d-1).
- II. B19 is the first player beyond the neutral zone to touch Team A's blocked kick try when B19 muffs the in-flight kick in the end zone. A66 recovers in the end zone. **RULING:** Award Team A two points.

#### Opportunity to Score—ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 8-3-2

- I. On a try attempt, B2 adds new impetus to a Team A fumble that is recovered in the Team B end zone by Team B. **RULING:** Safety, award Team A one point (Rules 8-3-1 and 8-5-1).
- II. On a try attempt, B2 kicks a Team A fumble into the Team B end zone where Team B recovers while grounded. **RULING:** Safety, one point for

- Team A, or Team A may accept the penalty for illegally kicking the ball (Rules 8-3-1 and 8-3-3-b-1) and repeat the down.
- III. On a one-point try attempt, B2 blocks A1's kick. The ball, which does not cross the neutral zone, is picked up by A2, and he advances the ball across Team B's goal line. **RULING:** Award Team A two points (Rule 8-3-1).
- IV. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked. A2 picks up the ball beyond the neutral zone in the field of play. **RULING:** The ball is dead where picked up by A2. The try is ended.
- V. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked. The ball, untouched beyond the neutral zone, (a) is recovered by B3 on his one-yard line or (b) hits the ground in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** (a) B3 may advance the ball. (b) The ball is dead the try is ended (Rule 8-3-1).
- VI. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked. B3 recovers the ball and advances across Team A's goal line. During B3's run, B4 clips. **RULING:** No score, the try is ended, and the penalty is declined by rule (Rule 8-3-4-b).
- VII. On a try attempt, B1 intercepts Team A's legal forward pass in his end zone. He runs the ball across Team A's goal line, and (a) there are no fouls during the run, (b) B3 clips during the run or (c) A2 fouls during the run. **RULING:** (a) Award Team B two points. (b) No score, the try is ended, and the penalty is declined by rule. (c) Award Team B two points, and the penalty is declined by rule (Rules 8-3-1 and 8-3-4-a and b).
- VIII. On a try attempt, A1 muffs the hand-to-hand snap from the snapper. A2 recovers the ball and carries it into Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Award Team A two points (Rule 2-11-2).
- IX. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked and B75 recovers at the two-yard line. B75 then fumbles and the ball rolls into the end zone, where B61 recovers while grounded. **RULING:** Safety. Award Team A one point (Rule 8-1-1).

### Fouls During a Try Before Team B Possession—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 8-3-3

- I. During a try attempt, Team A's legal kick, untouched and in the air, has crossed the neutral zone when a foul occurs. **RULING:** If the foul is by Team A and the try is unsuccessful, and Team B does not gain possession, the try ends. If the foul is by Team A and the try is successful, the penalty is at the previous spot. If the foul is by Team B and the try is successful, score the point unless Team A chooses to accept the penalty and attempt a two-point play. The try is exempt from postscrimmage kick enforcement. Penalties for Team B personal fouls on a successful try may be enforced on the subsequent kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. If the try is unsuccessful, Team A may accept the penalty and the down will be repeated.
- II. Both teams foul during a try, and Team B had not gained possession. **RULING:** Repeat the down at the previous spot.
- III. Lined up for the try at the middle of the B-3, Team A commits a false start and is penalized to the B-8. The kick attempt is blocked, but B77 was in the neutral zone at the snap. The penalty takes the ball to the B-4 for the



repeat of the down. Team A requests that the ball be placed at the right hash mark. **RULING:** The officials grant the request and the ball is made ready for play at the B-4 on the right hash mark.

- IV. During a try, both teams foul before Team B intercepts a forward pass. On the return, (a) B23 clips or (b) A18 tackles the ball carrier by twisting his face mask. **RULING:** (a) and (b) The fouls offset and the down is repeated.
- V. During a try, B79 is in the neutral zone at the snap. B20 intercepts a forward pass and A55 tackles him by pulling the face mask. **RULING:** The fouls offset and the down is repeated.

### **Fouls During a Try After Team B Possession—ARTICLE 4**

#### **Approved Ruling 8-3-4**

- I. B15 intercepts Team A's legal forward pass and is running at midfield when tackled by A19, who grasps and pulls B15's face mask. **RULING:** The penalty is declined by rule and the try is ended.
- II. B1 intercepts Team A's legal forward pass and runs it to midfield. During the run of the interception, B2 clips in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** The penalty is declined by rule.
- III. During a two-point try attempt, Team A is flagged for an illegal shift. B21 recovers a fumble and on the return, B45 clips and A80 punches an opponent. B21 carries the ball across the goal line. **RULING:** The score does not count, the fouls cancel, the down is not repeated and the try is ended. A80's foul for fighting will be enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. A80 is ejected.
- IV. During a two-point try attempt, Team A is flagged for an illegal shift. B21 recovers a fumble and on the return, A80 punches an opponent. B21 carries the ball across the goal line. **RULING:** The score counts and the penalty for A80's flagrant foul is enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. A80 is ejected.

## **Section 4. Field Goal**

### **Next Play—ARTICLE 2**

#### **Approved Ruling 8-4-2**

- I. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's untouched field goal attempt rolls dead on Team B's seven-yard line. **RULING:** Team B's ball at Team B's 40-yard line.
- II. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's attempted field goal touches B1 at the 10-yard line and goes out of bounds at the five-yard line. **RULING:** Team B's ball at Team B's five-yard line.
- III. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's attempted field goal strikes the ground at the three-yard line and bounces into the end zone, where it is received in the air and then downed by a Team B player. **RULING:** Touchback (Rule 8-6-1-b). Team B's ball at the 20-yard line.
- IV. Fourth and eight on Team B's 18-yard line. Team A's unsuccessful field goal attempt goes out of the end zone. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the 20-yard line.

- V. Team A's unsuccessful field goal attempt strikes the ground beyond the neutral zone and bounces back across the neutral zone, where it is recovered by B1 and advanced into the end zone. **RULING:** Touchdown (Rule 6-3-5).
- VI. Fourth and six on Team B's 18-yard line. Team A's unsuccessful field goal attempt strikes the ground beyond the neutral zone and bounces back across the neutral zone to Team B's 28-yard line, where it goes out of bounds or is recovered and downed by either team. The kick is untouched beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first and 10 at Team B's 28-yard line (Rules 6-3-6, 6-3-7, and 8-4-2-b).
- VII. Team A snaps the ball at the B-15 to attempt a field goal. The kick is blocked, crosses the neutral zone and lands at the B-12. Before any player touches it beyond the neutral zone, the ball rebounds behind the neutral zone and goes out of bounds at the (a) B-17; (b) B-25. **RULING:** (a) Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-17; (b) Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-25. (Rules 6-3-7 and 8-4-2-b)
- VIII. Fourth and goal at the B-10. The field goal attempt is blocked and hits the ground at the B-7. It then rebounds to the B-13 where B44 muffs it. A44 recovers at the B-11. **RULING:** First and 10 for Team A at the B-11. Team B has touched a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone. (Rule 6-3-3)

## Section 5. Safety

### How Scored—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 8-5-1

- I. A10, after receiving the snap in his own end zone, is downed with the ball resting on his goal line, its forward point being in the field of play. **RULING:** Safety. A part of the dead ball is on the ball carrier's goal line.
- II. A scrimmage kick fails to cross the neutral zone, or crosses the neutral zone and is first touched by Team B, or is untouched and then rebounds into the end zone, where it is declared dead in Team A's possession. **RULING:** Safety (Rule 8-7-2-a).
- III. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass (not a try) deep in his end zone and advances but does not get out of the end zone, where he is downed. During the run, B2 clips A1 in the end zone. **RULING:** Safety, since the penalty leaves the ball in Team B's possession in the end zone.
- IV. B1 intercepts a pass or fumble or catches a scrimmage or free kick between his five-yard line and the goal line, and his momentum carries him into the end zone. The ball remains in the end zone and is declared dead there in Team B's possession. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted, or the kick was caught. The ruling is the same if B1 had recovered a fumble, a backward pass or a kick under similar circumstances.
- V. B1 intercepts a pass or fumble or catches a scrimmage or free kick between his five-yard line and the goal line, and his momentum carries him into the end zone. Before the ball is declared dead, B2 clips in the end zone. B1 does not get out of the end zone, and the ball is declared dead. **RULING:** Safety by penalty. The basic spot is the end of the run where B1 gained

- possession between the five-yard line and the goal line, and the foul is behind the basic spot.
- VI. Team A's fumble or backward pass strikes the ground. Team B muffs the ball in an attempt to recover, but it crosses Team A's goal line, where Team A falls on the ball or the ball goes out of bounds from the end zone. **RULING:** Safety. The impetus came from the fumble or pass (Rule 8-7-2-a).
- VII. A36 intends to punt from behind its goal line, but he muffs the ball. After A36 recovers the ball, he runs into the pylon at the intersection of the sideline and goal line. **RULING:** Safety, unless the entire ball is beyond the goal line as the ball carrier contacts the sideline or pylon. The ball is dead at its most forward point when A36 contacts the pylon or sideline (Rules 2-31-3 and 4-2-4-d).
- VIII. B40 intercepts a pass on Team B's four-yard line. His momentum is taking him into the end zone when he fumbles the ball on the one-yard line and (a) B40, the fumbler, recovers the fumble in the end zone, or (b) B45, a teammate of the fumbler, recovers the fumble in the end zone. **RULING:** Safety in both (a) and (b).
- IX. B47 intercepts a pass at the B-3. His momentum carries him into the end zone where he fumbles. The ball rolls into the field of play. A33 recovers at the B-2 but he is hit and fumbles. The ball rolls into the end zone and over the end line. **RULING:** Touchback. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-20. The momentum rule applies only if the ball remains in the end zone and is declared dead there. (Rule 8-6-1)
- X. Third and five at the B-20. Defensive back B44 intercepts a forward pass in his end zone. While still in the end zone he fumbles the ball. It rolls forward, goes into the field of play, and in the scramble the ball goes back into the end zone (a) where B44 recovers while grounded; (b) and over the end line. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Safety, two points for Team A. The impetus for the ball going into the end zone the second time is B44's fumble. The scramble to recover the ball does not add new impetus. The momentum rule does not apply because the ball did not remain in the end zone. (Rule 8-7-2)
- XI. 4/Goal @ B-8. Runner A44 is hit at the B-5 and fumbles, and B54 bats the grounded loose ball at the B-3 back into his own end zone. A88 sees the loose ball and recovers while the ball is still in the end zone. **RULING:** Safety, score 2 points for Team A. The bat is a legal bat since B54 is batting the ball backward (Rule 9-4-1-c), but B54 does add a new impetus to the ball and is responsible for the ball's progress into Team B's end zone (Rule 8-7-2-b-1). When A88 recovers the ball, the ball is declared dead based on the 4th down fumble rule (Rule 7-2-2-a Exception 2). The ruling is a safety because the ball becomes dead by rule in the end zone, and B54 is responsible for the ball being there (Rule 8-5-1-a). The safety rule and the 4th down fumble rule would seem to be in conflict here, but the spirit and intent of the safety rule is extremely specific to this play and would supersede the 4th down fumble rule which describes generally how recoveries by Team A on 4th down are handled.

## Section 6. Touchback

### When Declared—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 8-6-1

- I. Team A's fumble strikes the pylon at the intersection of Team B's goal line and sideline. **RULING:** Touchback. Team B's ball at the 20-yard line (Rules 7-2-4-c and 4-2-3-b).
- II. B1 intercepts Team A's legal forward pass in his own end zone, after which A1 snatches the ball from his hand while in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Touchdown. The ball is not automatically dead when intercepted, but it becomes dead when A1 gets possession. However, if in the judgment of the official there is perceptible time during which the Team B player made no attempt to advance after the interception, declaring a touchback is justified.
- III. Third and five at the B-20. Defensive back B44 intercepts a forward pass in his end zone. While still in the end zone he fumbles the ball. It rolls forward, goes into the field of play, and in the scramble A33 kicks the ball into the end zone and over the end line. **RULING:** First and 10 for Team B at the B-30. The result of the play is a touchback, and therefore the basic spot for enforcement of the 10-yard penalty for illegally kicking the ball is the B-20. The touchback results because of the new impetus given by A33 kicking the ball. (Rules 2-16-1-a, 8-7-1, 10-2-2-d-2(a))

## Section 7. Responsibility and Impetus

### Initial Impetus—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 8-7-2

- I. Ball carrier A1, advancing toward Team B's goal line, fumbles when B1 bats the ball from his hand or tackles him from the rear. In either case, A1 loses possession short of the goal line, and the ball goes into Team B's end zone, where Team B recovers. **RULING:** Touchback. Impetus is charged to the fumble by Team A (Rule 8-6-1-a).
- II. Any kick by Team A strikes the ground and a Team B player bats the ball across Team B's goal line, where Team B recovers it while grounded or it goes out of bounds. **RULING:** New impetus is given by Team B. Safety, two points for Team A. Batting the kick is considered to have destroyed the impetus of the kick and imparted a new impetus. However, merely touching or deflecting the kick, or being struck by it, does not destroy the impetus of the kick (Rule 8-5-1-a).
- III. Team A punts. The ball is touched by Team B (no impetus added) and crosses Team B's goal line. Then Team B falls on the ball or the ball goes out of bounds from the end zone. **RULING:** Touchback. The same ruling applies if a kick in flight strikes Team B or merely is deflected by an attempted catch. Team B may recover and advance, and it is a touchback if a Team B player is downed in the end zone or goes out of bounds behind the goal line (Rule 8-6-1-a).
- IV. Team A free kicks from its 35-yard line. The ball is rolling on the ground on Team B's three-yard line when B10 kicks the ball into the end zone and over the end line. **RULING:** Safety, due to the new impetus by B10. Team

B foul for illegally kicking the ball. If the penalty (10 yards) is accepted, the down is repeated with the free kick at the A-45. (Rules 9-4-4 and 10-2-2-d-4).

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# RULE 9

## Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules

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### Section 1. Personal Fouls

#### Striking Fouls and Tripping—ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 9-1-2

- I. A player on defense sticks out his foot and trips an opponent. (a) The opponent is a wide receiver running a passing route. (b) The opponent is the ball carrier. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Personal foul, Tripping. Penalty—15 yards, automatic first down.
- II. A1, a ball carrier, strikes tackler B6 with his extended forearm just before being tackled. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards. Enforce from the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone. Ejection if flagrant. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- III. A11 completes a forward pass to A88 who is tackled in the field of play. During the play defensive end B88 is flagged for a personal foul against A79. **RULING:** The 15-yard penalty is enforced at the spot where A88 is tackled (Rules 7-3-12 and 9-1 Penalty).
- IV. 1/10 @ A-25. Defender B21 is in press coverage, and at the snap strikes wideout A88 in the face mask. A88 is initially disrupted from running the route. A12 is sacked for a 7-yard loss. **RULING:** Personal foul by B21 for striking A88. Team A will have 1/10 @ A-40. With this type action, continuous contact to the opponent's face, helmet (including the face mask) or neck is not a requirement to be a foul as per Rule 9-1-8-a.

#### Targeting and Making Forcible Contact With the Crown of the Helmet—ARTICLE 3

##### Approved Ruling 9-1-3

- I. Passer A12 inside the tackle box is looking for an open receiver. Before or just as he releases the ball, A12 is hit from the side at the ribs, thigh or knee by B79, who dives forward and leads with the crown (top) of his helmet. This occurs in the (a) first half; (b) second half. **RULING:** Foul by B79 for targeting his opponent and initiating contact with the top of his helmet. 15 yards, first down. B79 is automatically disqualified (a) for the remainder of the game. (b) for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game.
- II. Player number 21 for the home team is disqualified late in the 3rd quarter for targeting with the crown of the helmet. This was number 21's third targeting foul in the season. **RULING:** Enforce the 15-yard penalty for

targeting and number 21 is disqualified. That player may remain in the team area for the balance of the game. If a player receives a 3rd Targeting foul within the same season, in addition to being disqualified for that game, the player will receive a one-game suspension in that team's next scheduled game. While serving this suspension, this player may not be in the team area nor in the playing enclosure. Note: The second half targeting foul may be appealed to the national coordinator for video review.

### Targeting and Making Forcible Contact to Head or Neck Area of a Defenseless Player—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 9-1-4

- I. Receiver A83 has just leaped and received a forward pass. As A83 is about to regain his balance, B45 launches and drives into A83 above the shoulder area with his helmet or shoulder. This occurs in the (a) first half; (b) second half. **RULING:** Foul by B45 for targeting and initiating contact with a defenseless opponent above the shoulders. 15 yards, first down. B45 is automatically disqualified (a) for the remainder of the game. (b) for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game.
- II. As ball carrier A20 sweeps around the end and heads upfield, he lowers his head and contacts defensive end B89 who is trying to tackle him. B89's head is up and the players meet helmet to helmet. **RULING:** No foul. Neither A20 nor B89 is a defenseless player and neither has targeted his opponent in the sense of Rule 9-1-3.
- III. A44 is covering the kickoff that opens the second half. During the return as A44 is running at the Team B 45-yard line, B66 targets and launches into A44 from the side, a blind-side block. B66 first makes contact with his forearm at A44's (a) neck; (b) upper arm or shoulder. **RULING:** (a) Foul by B66 for an illegal blind-side block and targeting a defenseless player by initiating contact at the head or neck area. 15-yard penalty at the end of the run. B66 is disqualified for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game. (b) Foul for illegal blind-side block. This is not a foul for targeting because the contact by B66 is not to the head or neck area. (Rule 2-27-14)
- IV. A12 who normally plays quarterback is lined up as a wide receiver in the backfield and A33 is five yards behind the snapper in a shotgun formation. A33's pass intended for A12 is intercepted. During the interception return B55 targets and launches at A33, striking him in the side of the helmet. **RULING:** Foul by B55 for targeting and initiating contact at the head of a defenseless player. For purposes of Rule 2-27-14, A33 is a defenseless player since he played the down in the role of the quarterback.
- V. End A81 is split far to the left of the formation, to the outside of defensive end B89. On a sweep play in B89's direction he moves to his left to focus on the ball carrier, losing sight of A81. A81 then cuts to the inside, takes aim and launches at B89, forcibly contacting him with his forearm to B89's neck. **RULING:** Foul for blind-side block with targeting. Under Rule 9-1-4, 15 yard penalty, A81 is disqualified. B89 is a defenseless player as he is subject to the blind-side block. (Rule 2-27-14)
- VI. Ball carrier A33 has gained several yards and is in the grasp of two defenders. A33's forward progress has been stopped and is being driven

back, but the ball has not been declared dead. Linebacker B55 crouches and thrusts himself forward, driving his forearm into the side of A33's helmet. **RULING:** Targeting foul by B55. 15 yard penalty, B55 is disqualified. A33 is a defenseless player since he is in the grasp of the opponents and his forward progress has been stopped. (Rule 2-27-14)

- VII. Pass receiver A88 has just caught the ball when defender B55 launches and drives his shoulder and forearm into his upper body. The back judge flags B55 for targeting to the head-neck area and he is disqualified. The referee makes his announcement of the targeting foul, and the play goes to review. **RULING:** After review, Instant Replay rules that there was not forcible contact to the head-neck area, overturning the disqualification of B55. The referee announces that B55 is not disqualified and that there will be no 15-yard penalty.
- VIII. Punt receiver B44 is in position to catch a punt. Gunner A88 races down the field and launches at B44, driving the side of his helmet and shoulder into B44's upper body the instant before the ball arrives. The side judge and field judge throw their flags and report to the referee that A88 is charged with kick-catch interference and targeting to the head-neck area. The referee makes his announcement of kick-catch interference with targeting to the head-neck area. The play goes to review. **RULING:** After review, Instant Replay rules that A88 did not make forcible contact to the head-neck area, overturning his disqualification. The referee announces that A88 is not disqualified and that the 15-yard penalty for interference with the opportunity to catch a kick will be enforced.
- IX. In a game without instant replay, the conference or teams have agreed to use the halftime review process for first-half targeting fouls. During the first quarter, pass receiver A88 has just caught the ball when defender B55 launches and drives his shoulder and forearm into his upper body. The back judge flags B55 for targeting to the head-neck area. The referee makes his announcement of the targeting foul and that B55 is disqualified. **RULING:** In the halftime review of the video, the referee and the crew determine that B55 did not make forcible contact to A88's head-neck area, overturning his disqualification. The referee informs both head coaches that B55 may return to the game in the second half. Before the kickoff for the second half, the referee announces to the stadium that after review, the disqualification of B55 is overturned and he may return to the game for the second half.
- X. On a punt return, B44 launches at A66 from the blind side and drives his shoulder into him. The force of the contact is at A66's side below the shoulder. **RULING:** Foul for blind-side block. A66 is a defenseless player because B44 executes a blind-side block. However, this is not a targeting foul because the forcible contact is not to the head/neck area.

## Blocking Below the Waist—ARTICLE 6

### Approved Ruling 9-1-6

- I. 1/10 @ A-40. Back A44 is lined up just behind the RT, and has his left foot inside the RT's outside foot. At the snap, A44 works back across the formation and blocks B77 below the waist from the side. B77 is inside the tackle box and 1 yard in the offensive backfield at the time of the block.



During the play, A33 runs for a 12-yard gain. **RULING:** The block by A44 is an illegal block below the waist because it is not directed from the front. Stationary backs lined up within the tackle box may block below the waist in the tackle box until the ball leaves the tackle box only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front. The penalty is 15 yards and is enforced from the previous spot. Team A will have 1/25 @ A-25.

- II. 1/10 @ A-40. Back A44 is stationary and lined up 4 yards deep and is just behind the RG. After the snap, QB A12 takes a deep drop, and remains in the tackle box looking downfield. Linebacker, B55 blitzes between the LG and LT, and A44 crosses over to the left side of the formation and blocks B55 below the waist at the A-36. The block is directed from the front. After the block, A12's pass is completed to A88 for a gain of 15-yards. **RULING:** There is no foul on the play. The block by back A44 is legal as a stationary back lined up within the tackle box may block below the waist in the tackle box until the ball leaves the tackle box only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front. Team A will have 1/10 @ B-45.
- III. Back A41 is stationary at the snap directly behind the right tackle in a balanced line formation. His left shoulder is inside the tackle box. The quarterback hands the ball to back A22 who runs straight ahead. A41 blocks B2 who moves into the offensive backfield to make a play on the ball carrier before A22 reaches the line of scrimmage. The block is below the waist and clearly at the side. **RULING:** Illegal block. A41 is partially inside the tackle box and behind the second lineman at the snap, but the block is not from the front.
- IV. Defensive end B88 is lined up on the outside shoulder of tackle of A75. On the initial line charge, B88 blocks tackle A75 below the waist from the side inside the tackle box. **RULING:** No foul for an illegal block below the waist.
- V. Back A22 is stationary inside the tackle box at the snap. After the snap A22 shoots between the tackle and the guard and blocks B55 below the waist directed from the front. The initial contact is three yards beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Illegal block below the waist. The block is directed from the front, but is beyond the neutral zone.
- VI. 3/7 @ A-30. The ball is at the left hash mark. Back A22 is split completely outside the frame of the tackle on the left side, and B40 moves out to cover him. The handoff goes to back A44 who sweeps around the right end. As the play develops B40 follows the play and A22 chases him. At the A-34 beyond the right hash mark A22 overtakes B40 and blocks him below the waist clearly and directly at the front ("10-to-2"). A44 is tackled at the B-45. **RULING:** Illegal block below the waist. A22's initial position is outside the tackle box, so A22 may not legally block below the waist.
- VII. 1/10 @ A-40. A12 takes the snap and starts on a sweep to his right. Guard A66 pulls and leads the play. As the play develops linebacker B55 blocks A66 from the front at the thigh at the A-39. A12 is driven out of bounds at the A-48. **RULING:** Illegal block below the waist. B55 was not aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage and therefore cannot block below the waist.

- VIII. At the snap tight end A85 is aligned six yards from the snapper. Before the ball has left the tackle box, A85 blocks tackle B77 below the waist at the side. **RULING:** Illegal block below the waist. A85's initial position is outside the tackle box at the snap, so A85 may not block below the waist. Fifteen-yard penalty.
- IX. 1/10 @ A-45. Guard A66 is next to the snapper. Immediately after the snap, A66 blocks (a) nose guard B55 at the A-46, or (b) linebacker B33 at the A-48. In either case the block is below the waist at the side of the opponent. **RULING:** (a) Legal block. A66 has left the tackle box, but a block initiated one yard beyond the neutral zone is considered within the tackle box. (b) Foul, illegal block below the waist. In this case, A66 has left the tackle box and has gone to the second level to make this low block. To be legal this block may not be below the waist.

### Late Hit, Action Out of Bounds—ARTICLE 7

#### Approved Ruling 9-1-7

- I. After the ball is dead, a player throws himself onto an opponent lying on the ground. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot and first down if by a Team B player and not in conflict with other rules. "Piling on" applies to a ball carrier or to any other opponent who is prostrate when the ball becomes dead.
- II. On a sweep play toward the sideline, linebacker B55 goes out of bounds to avoid a block. Guard A66 is leading the play, and just as he steps on the sideline with his front foot he drives his shoulder in the waist at the front of B55 who is still out of bounds. **RULING:** Legal block. A66 does not have both feet out of bounds.

### Roughing the Passer—ARTICLE 9

#### Approved Ruling 9-1-9

- I. After passer A17 releases the ball, B68 takes two strides and charges into A17, showing no attempt to avoid contact. **RULING:** Roughing the passer. The passer is a defenseless player who is vulnerable to injury and must be fully protected. After taking two strides, B68 should be aware that A17 has released the ball and be able to avoid contacting him.
- II. Quarterback A11 drops back in the pocket and sets up to pass. Just as he releases the ball he is hit by end B88 who drives his shoulder into A11's knee. The pass is (a) incomplete; (b) caught by A44 who is tackled after a 12-yard gain to the B-40. **RULING:** Foul by B88 for forcibly hitting the passer at the knee or below, in violation of Rule 9-1-9-b. Automatic first down and 15-yard penalty enforced at (a) the previous spot; (b) at the B-40, the end of the run by A44.
- III. Quarterback A11 drops back in the pocket and sets up to pass. He then scrambles to his right, sets up again and is in the passing posture when he is hit by end B88 who drives his shoulder into A11's knee. A11 then pulls the ball in and goes to the ground because of being tackled by B88. **RULING:** Foul by B88, violation of Rule 9-1-9-b. While A11 is technically not a passer because he did not release the ball, the action by B88 is a foul under 9-1-9-b because of the vulnerability of A11 as a potential passer in a passing posture.

**Chop Blocking—ARTICLE 10****Approved Ruling 9-1-10**

- I. On a forward pass play, A75 is blocking B66 at the waist behind the neutral zone. While A75 maintains contact, A47 subsequently blocks B66 at his thigh. **RULING:** Chop block, 15 yards from the previous spot.
- II. As the flow of the play moves to the left, right tackle A77 is disengaging from his block above the thigh with B50 when A27 blocks B50 at his knee. **RULING:** Chop block, 15 yards. Previous-spot enforcement if the foul occurs behind the neutral zone.
- III. Immediately after the snap, left guard A65 and left tackle A79 simultaneously block B66, who is in the neutral zone. (a) Both blocks are at the thigh. (b) One contact is at the waist and the other at the knee. **RULING:** (a) Legal blocks for a low-low combination. (b) Foul, chop block.
- IV. Tight end A87 and wingback A43 are leading the play when both simultaneously block linebacker B17, who is three yards beyond the neutral zone. (a) Both blocks are above the waist. (b) One block is above the waist and the other at the knee. **RULING:** (a) Legal blocks. (b) Foul, chop block.
- V. After snapping the ball, snapper A54 brushes by nose guard B62 on his way to block a linebacker. A54 makes slight contact with B62, or B62 reaches out and uses his arm to initiate contact with A54. While B62 and A54 are in contact, right guard A68 blocks B62 at the knee from the front. **RULING:** Legal. A54 is not blocking B62. The incidental contact or B62's initiating contact does not constitute part of a combination block, and hence there is no chop block.

**Contact Against the Snapper—ARTICLE 14****Approved Ruling 9-1-14**

- I. A10 is in a shotgun-type formation 7-1/2 yards behind the snapper, who has his head down and is looking backward through his legs. Immediately after the snap, nose guard B55 charges directly at the snapper and contacts him by pushing him backward. **RULING:** Legal. The snapper is not afforded any special protection because Team A is not in a scrimmage kick formation, since A10 is not at least 10 yards deep (Rule 2-16-10). The snapper does have the usual protection against any personal foul for unnecessary roughness.
- II. Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation with the punter 15 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Immediately after the snap, nose guard B55 charges directly at the snapper, contacts him, and drives him backward. The ball is snapped to an upback three yards behind the scrimmage line or to the potential kicker, who instead runs with or passes the ball. **RULING:** Foul. Penalty—15 yards and automatic first down. The snapper may not be contacted until one second has elapsed after the snap when Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation.
- III. Immediately after the snap, with Team A in a scrimmage kick formation, B71 is lined up within one yard of the line of scrimmage and is outside of the frame of the snapper. B71 attempts to “shoot the gap” between the snapper and the adjacent lineman. B71's initial legal contact is with the

lineman next to the snapper. **RULING:** Legal. Incidental contact with the snapper after this initial legal contact is not a foul (Rule 2-16-10).

### **Horse Collar Tackle—ARTICLE 15**

#### **Approved Ruling 9-1-15**

- I. As ball carrier A20 races down field near the sideline, defender B56 grabs him from behind by the back of the jersey at the collar or by the collar of his shoulder pad. B56 continues with this contact for several yards but A20 does not go to the ground until tackled by another defender. **RULING:** Legal play. B56 did not foul because he did not abruptly pull A20 down.

### **Roughing or Running Into Kicker or Holder—ARTICLE 16**

#### **Approved Ruling 9-1-16**

- I. A1 catches a long snap and plans to punt from behind his line of scrimmage but misses the ball, which falls to the ground. A1 is then contacted by B1. **RULING:** Team A fumble. No foul by B1. There is no kicker until the ball is kicked.
- II. A1 kicks the ball, after which B1, unable to stop his attempt to block the kick, makes contact with the kicker or holder. **RULING:** This action could be either “Roughing” or “Running into” the kicker or holder. When in question, the ruling is to be “roughing,” which carries a penalty of 15 yards and an automatic first down.
- III. A1, from a nonscrimmage kick formation, makes a quick, unexpected kick so suddenly that B1 cannot avoid contact. **RULING:** This is not roughing or running into the kicker since the rule applies only when it is obvious that a kick will be made.
- IV. B1 runs into player A1, who has kicked the ball and has had a reasonable time to regain his balance. **RULING:** Not a foul by B1 unless ruled as running into or throwing himself against an opponent obviously out of the play (Rule 9-1-12).
- V. After B1 runs into the kicker, kicker A25 simulates being roughed. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls.
- VI. Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation. Punter A1 moves laterally two or three steps to recover a faulty snap, or recovers a snap that went over his head, and then kicks the ball. B2 contacts A1 in an unsuccessful attempt to block the kick. **RULING:** A1 does not automatically lose his protection in either case unless he carries or possesses the ball outside the tackle box. While in the tackle box A1 is entitled to protection as in any other kicking situation. When it becomes obvious that A1 intends to kick in a normal punting position, defensive players must avoid him after he kicks the ball.
- VII. Punter A22 is 15 yards behind the neutral zone when he catches the long snap, sprints to his right at an angle toward the line of scrimmage, and runs outside the tackle box. He then stops and punts the ball, and (a) is immediately hit by a diving B89; or (b) is immediately hit by B89, and B89 is guilty of targeting. **RULING:** (a) Legal play, no foul by B89. A22 loses his roughing or running-into protection by carrying the ball outside the tackle box. (b) Even though the kicker is outside the tackle box, targeting is a personal foul and the penalty will be enforced at the previous spot.

**Continued Participation Without Helmet—ARTICLE 17****Approved Ruling 9-1-17**

- I. During a down B55's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. B55 immediately picks up his helmet, puts it on and continues to chase the ball carrier. **RULING:** Personal foul by B55 for continuing to participate after losing his helmet. The clock stops at the end of the down and B55 must leave the game for the next down. (Rule 3-3-9)

**Blind-Side Block—ARTICLE 18****Approved Ruling 9-1-18**

- I. B44 intercepts the pass of A12 at the B-20 and turns back up-field on the return. During the return, B21 approaches A88 at midfield from the blind side and blocks A88 (a) with extended hands; (b) with a screen type block; (c) by attacking with forcible contact with his shoulder into the chest of A88; (d) by attacking with forcible contact with the shoulder into the head of A88. B44 returns the pass to the A-20. **RULING:** (a) No foul. (b) No foul. (c) Personal Foul, blind-side block, 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul. (d) Personal Foul, Blind-Side Block with Targeting, 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul and B21 is disqualified.

**Section 2. Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls****Unsportsmanlike Acts—ARTICLE 1****Approved Ruling 9-2-1**

- I. Team B scores a touchdown on a kickoff return, and substitutes from the Team B area, with no intention of entering the game, run to the end zone to congratulate the ball carrier. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike act. Penalty—15 yards, enforced on the try, the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods. Officials should note the numbers of the offending players, for possible ejection later in the game upon committing a second unsportsmanlike conduct foul (9-2-1-a-Penalty).
- II. Third and 15 at the B-20. Eligible A88 catches a pass at the B-18 and heads for the goal line. At the B-10 he goes into a “goose step” and continues this action as he crosses the goal line. **RULING:** Live-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. Fifteen-yard penalty enforced at the spot of the foul, which is the B-10, and repeat third down. Third and 20 at the B-25.
- III. Second and 5 at the B-40. Back A22 takes a backward pass from the quarterback, circles right end, and heads for the goal line. Guard A66, who had pulled out to lead the play, legally blocks B90 to the ground and then stands over him at the B-30 taunting and screaming obscenities. This draws a flag from the head linesman, when A22 is at the B-10 before continuing into the end zone. **RULING:** Live-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. Fifteen-yard penalty enforced at the spot of the foul, which is the B-30, and repeat second down. Second and 10 at the B-45.
- IV. Third and 15 at the B-20. Eligible A88 catches a pass at the B-18 and heads for the goal line. Very close to the goal line he dives into the end zone, with no Team B player closer than about 10 yards. The field judge is

- uncertain of the exact spot where A88 started his diving action. **RULING:** Foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. Administer as a dead-ball foul: The touchdown counts and the penalty is enforced on the try, the succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- V. Second and seven at the B-30. Nose guard B55 is lined up in the neutral zone at the snap. Back A22 takes the ball on a quick play up the middle, bursts into the open, and at the B-10 he turns around prances backward into the end zone. The head linesman and the line judge both have flags for the offside foul, and the back judge drops his flag for the action by A22. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls, repeat the down. Second and seven at the B-30.
- VI. First and 10 at the 50. The quarterback pitches out to running back A44 who circles right end and races toward the goal line. The line judge trailing the play flags linebacker B57 for screaming obscenities at him, complaining that he was held by the tight end. A44 scores a touchdown. **RULING:** Live-ball unsportsmanlike conduct against B57. The penalty carries over to either the try or the kickoff, at the option of Team A.
- VII. Third and 15 at the A-45. A12 drops back to pass and is sacked by tackle B77 for a 10-yard loss. B77 leaps to his feet, beats his chest, stands over A12 and taunts him, and showboats to the crowd, drawing flags from the referee and the line judge. **RULING:** Dead-ball unsportsmanlike conduct by B77. Fifteen-yard penalty at the dead-ball spot plus automatic first down. First and 10 for Team A at the 50.
- VIII. Safety B33 intercepts a pass at the B-10 and returns for a touchdown. As he is coming down the sideline covering the play the line judge drops his flag after he runs into the Team B head coach who is just on the field of play near the B-40. **RULING:** Although this is a foul that takes place while the ball is alive, it is treated as a dead-ball foul against the team because it is committed by a non-player. The touchdown counts and the 15-yard penalty is enforced on the try, the succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- IX. Second and five at the A-45. Ball carrier A33 breaks out into the open and has a clear path to the goal line. At the B-2 he suddenly makes a sharp left turn and trots along the B-2 as the Team B players begin to catch up to him. He then carries the ball into the end zone. A33 next runs to the stands and begins to exchange “high-fives” with the fans. **RULING:** No score. A33 is charged with two fouls for unsportsmanlike conduct, one live-ball and the other dead-ball. Both 15-yard penalties are enforced and A33 is ejected from the game. First and 10 for Team A at the B-32. (Rule 9-2-6)
- X. After the ball carrier is tackled, A55 and B73 engage in a scuffle such that officials have to separate them and throw flags. Both A55 and B73 are charged with dead-ball personal fouls. **RULING:** Offsetting dead-ball fouls. Each player is also charged with an unsportsmanlike conduct foul which counts toward the two such fouls leading to automatic ejection. The referee announces either the first or second unsportsmanlike conduct foul for A55 and B73.

- XI. During the play, the ball carrier fumbles and several players dive for the ball. B55 grabs A33 and slings him off the pile. **RULING:** B55 is charged with a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. 15 yards and automatic first down. The referee announces that this is either the first or second unsportsmanlike conduct foul against B55. If it is the second, B55 is ejected from the game.
- XII. During a dead-ball time, a head coach or an assistant coach is flagged for coming out to the numbers and cursing the officials in a loud and abusive manner. **RULING:** The officials charge either the head coach or the assistant coach with a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. The referee announces that this is either the first or second unsportsmanlike conduct foul against the coach in question. If it is the second, the coach in question is ejected from the game.

### Unfair Tactics—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 9-2-2

- I. After the ball is ready for play, Team A goes into a formation with two players split wide on both sides of the snapper and two other Team A linemen adjacent to the snapper. No more than four players are legally in the backfield. Team A sends in two substitutes, who take positions on the line of scrimmage adjacent to the two split offensive linemen on the opposite side of the field of play from their team bench. This leaves Team A with nine players on the line of scrimmage and four backfield players all legally in position. Immediately and before the snap, two Team A linemen nearest their team's bench leave the field of play and are off at the snap. Seven players are on the line of scrimmage, five of whom are Team A linemen numbered 50 to 79. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. This is a simulated replacement of a player to confuse the opponents.
- II. On fourth down at Team B's 12-yard line, A1 enters the field of play with a kicking shoe while his 11 teammates are in the huddle. A1 kneels and measures the distance from the neutral zone to the kicking spot. While his teammates are leaving the huddle, A1 leaves the field of play with the shoe. Team A quickly runs a play from scrimmage. **RULING:** Team A foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. There shall be no simulated replacement of a player to confuse the opponents, and a player who communicates must remain in the game for one down.
- III. A1 leaves the field of play during a down. Team A huddles with 10 players. Substitute A12 enters, and A2 simulates leaving the field but sets near the sideline for a "hide-out" pass. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. This is a simulated replacement of a player to confuse opponents.
- IV. While a team is legally set to attempt a field goal, the potential holder for the kick goes toward his team area asking for a shoe. A shoe is thrown on the field and the player, in motion toward his team area, turns toward the goal line. The ball is snapped to the player in the kicking position, who throws a pass to the player who had turned up field after asking for a shoe. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- V. Team A is lined up in scrimmage kick formation and has been set for one second. One of the offensive backs shouts to and motions to A40,

the blocker on the right wing, to get off the field. At the snap, A40 is in legal motion toward his sideline. A40 turns downfield and becomes a pass receiver. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. This is a tactic associated with the substitution process to deceive opponents.

- VI. After the down is over, Team A sends in three substitutes, and three players begin to leave the field. A88, who participated in the previous play, trails the three replaced players toward the Team A sideline. The three replaced players continue into the team area, but A88 stops and sets up on the line of scrimmage very close to the sideline. After the ball is snapped A88 runs down the sideline and catches a forward pass. **RULING:** Team A foul at the snap, unsportsmanlike conduct for unfair tactics: using the substitution process to deceive the opponents. Live-ball foul. Penalty: 15 yards at the previous spot.
- VII. 4/10 @ A-35. As Team A begins substitutions for a potential punt, it is discovered that Team A has assigned three players wearing the number 2. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike Conduct charged against the head coach. After enforcement, 4/25 @ A-20. This counts toward the two Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls that leads to automatic ejection.
- VIII. 4/1 @ B-40. QB A12 moves from shotgun formation to under center and barks signals in an unsuccessful attempt to draw Team B offside. With 10 seconds remaining on the play clock, A12 backs away from the center and jogs toward the sideline being very demonstrative with his arms and waiving to the bench. As A12 approaches the sideline, the ball is snapped directly to back A44 just before the play clock expires and A44 runs to the B-38. **RULING:** A, 4/16 @ A-45 - Unsportsmanlike Conduct by A12, penalize Team A 15 yards from the previous spot. The action by A12 is in violation of the spirit of Rule 9-2-2-b.

### Unfair Acts—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 9-2-3

- I. After the ball is ready for play and the umpire (or center judge) is in his regular position, Team A quickly replaces some players with substitutes, gets set for the required one second and snaps the ball. The umpire (or center judge) is attempting to get to the ball to allow the defense to match up, but he is unable to prevent the snap. **RULING:** The play is shut down, the game clock is stopped and the defense is allowed to substitute in response to Team A's late substitutions. No foul. The play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts on the ready-for-play signal. The game clock starts on the ready-for-play signal or the snap, depending on its condition when play was stopped. The referee informs the Team A head coach that any subsequent such actions will result in a foul against the team for unsportsmanlike conduct. (Rule 3-5-2)
- II. Team A, trailing by nine points, has 1st-and-10 on the B-22 with 0:35 showing on the game clock. At the snap, B21, B40 and B44 blatantly hold, wrapping both arms around Team A's wideouts and take them to the ground. Quarterback A12 has no receiver in the route, scrambles and then legally throws the ball away. After the play, the game clock reads 0:26. The back judge, field judge and side judge have a flag down for Team B holding on each of their keys. **RULING:** This is a blatant and obvious unfair act



- designed to take time off the clock. The referee will convert the holding fouls to an unsportsmanlike conduct fouls. Penalize half the distance to the goal. Team A will have 1st and 10 at the B-11. The game clock is reset to 0:35 and starts on the next snap. B21, B40 and B44 each have one unsportsmanlike foul counter.
- III. Team A, ahead in the score by four points, has 4th-and-10 at the A-30 with 0:14 seconds remaining in the game. From a shotgun formation, A12 receives the snap, retreats back toward his own goal line, and moves out of the tackle box. At the snap, each Team A lineman blatantly holds the Team B player in front of them, preventing the defensive linemen from immediately rushing the passer. When rushers approach A12 he throws the ball high so that it lands beyond the line of scrimmage and out of bounds. When the pass hits the ground, the game clock reads 0:00. The umpire, center judge (if applicable) and referee each have a flag on the ground for holding on Team A. **RULING:** This is a blatant and obvious unfair act designed to take time off of the clock. The referee will convert the holding fouls to unsportsmanlike conduct fouls. Penalize Team A 15 yards from the previous spot. Team A will have 4th and 25 at the A-15. The game clock is reset to 0:14 and starts on the next snap. Each Team A lineman guilty of holding will have one unsportsmanlike foul counter.
- IV. 1/10 @ A-25 with 0:01 remaining in the game and Team A trails by 5 points. A12 throws a pass that is complete to A88 at midfield. After the catch by A88, there are a series of legal backwards passes keeping the ball alive in Team A possession. Eventually A21 laterals the ball toward teammate A44, and the ball hits the ground with no recovery. The Team B bench thinking that the ball is dead rushes the field and many squad members are on the field. A44 recovers the ball and begins running and encounters heavy traffic with the Team B squad members on the field, reverses field and is finally tackled by B50 at the B-30. **RULING:** No substitute, coach or any person subject to the rules, other than a player or official may interfere in any way with the ball or a player while the ball is in play. This unfair act will be penalized 15 yards as a live ball foul. The Referee may enforce any penalty that they consider equitable, including awarding a score.

### Game Administration and Sideline Interference—ARTICLE 5

#### Approved Ruling 9-2-5

- I. On the opening kickoff, B22 catches the kick at his goal line and returns the ball down the sideline on Team B's side of the field. As he moves down the sideline officiating the play, the side judge either runs into or must run around a Team B coach or squad member in the restricted area ("the white"). B22 is driven out of bounds at the A-20. **RULING:** Either situation is physical interference with an official during the play. No warning. Team B foul for unsportsmanlike conduct administered as a dead-ball foul. After the 15-yard penalty, Team B will have first and 10 at the A-35.
- II. During a long kickoff return, the Side Judge has to stop and run around the head coach who is out of the coaching box in the restricted area or on the field of play near the sideline. **RULING:** Team foul for unsportsmanlike

conduct. Administer as a dead-ball foul. Penalize 15 yards at the succeeding spot. This is a team foul, and is not charged as an unsportsmanlike conduct foul against the head coach.

- III. During a long kickoff return, the head coach and/or other coaches are outside the coaching box and are in the restricted area or on the field of play near the sideline. No physical interference is made with an official during the play. **RULING:** Administer as a dead-ball foul.

*First infraction:* Warning for sideline interference. No yardage penalty.

*Second and third infractions:* Delay of game for sideline interference, five yards from the succeeding spot.

*Fourth and subsequent infractions:* Team unsportsmanlike conduct foul for sideline interference. Penalize 15 yards at the succeeding spot. This is a team foul, and is not charged as an unsportsmanlike conduct foul against any coach.

### **Ejected Players and Coaches—ARTICLE 6**

#### **Approved Ruling 9-2-6**

- I. During a long kickoff return, the head coach of the kicking team comes onto the field of play, vigorously and angrily protesting that there should have been a flag for holding by the receiving team during the return. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike conduct foul against the head coach. Administer as a dead-ball foul. Penalize 15 yards at the succeeding spot. This counts as one of the unsportsmanlike conduct fouls against the head coach. If this were his second foul for unsportsmanlike conduct, the head coach would be ejected from the game. A head coach ejected from the game may designate a new head coach.

## **Section 3. Blocking, Use of Hand and Arm**

### **Interfering for or Helping the Ball Carrier or Passer—ARTICLE 2**

#### **Approved Ruling 9-3-2**

- I. In trying to gain yardage, ball carrier A44 is slowed by defensive players attempting to make the tackle. Back A22 (a) puts his hands on the buttocks of A44 and pushes him forward; (b) pushes the pile of teammates who begin to surround A44; (c) grabs the arm of A44 and tries to pull him forward for more yardage. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Legal. It is not a foul to push the ball carrier or the pile. (c) Foul for assisting the runner. Five-yard penalty with three-and-one enforcement. (Rule 9-3-2-b)

### **Holding and Use of Hands or Arms: Offense—ARTICLE 3**

#### **Approved Ruling 9-3-3**

- I. A6 is advancing the ball. During the run, A12 vigorously blocks B2 with a rough push in the back above the waist. **RULING:** Illegal block in the back. Penalty—10 yards.
- II. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier, while charging across the neutral zone, contacts an opponent with his hands and arms not parallel to the ground or his hands cupped or closed but with the palms not facing the opponent. **RULING:** Legal use of hands.

- III. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier, behind the neutral zone, has his arms parallel to the ground and contacts an opponent above the shoulders. **RULING:** Illegal use of hands. Penalty—10 yards or 15 yards for personal foul, previous-spot enforcement. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- IV. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier delivers a blow with the hand(s) closed to an opponent below the shoulders. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards. Enforce at the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- V. A2's hands contact defensive player B2 in a legal block. B2 spins to avoid blocker A2, whose hands then contact B2's back. **RULING:** Legal block.
- VI. A2's hands contact defensive player B2's back when B2 spins to avoid A2. A2 keeps his hands on B2's back while B2 advances toward the passer. **RULING:** Legal block.
- VII. A2's hands contact defensive player B2 when B2 spins to avoid blocker A2, whose hands then contact B2's back. After A2's hands lose contact with B2, A2 advances and pushes B2 in the back. **RULING:** Illegal block in the back. Penalty—10 yards. Enforce at the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone (Rule 2-3-4). Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- VIII. A1 in, beyond or behind the neutral zone contacts an opponent with an open hand or with hands closed or cupped and palms not facing the opponent. **RULING:** Legal block.
- IX. A12 takes the snap and retreats to pass. Defensive end B95 gets past A75 and is about to tackle A12, who is still inside the tackle box. A75 pushes B95 in the back at the numbers to prevent him from making the tackle. A12's pass is complete for a touchdown. **RULING:** Touchdown counts. No foul by A75. Such continuing action involving pass protection while the passer remains inside the tackle box are within the spirit of the exception to Rule 9-3-6 and are thus legal. However, if this is a totally separate action and a new block outside the blocking zone, it is a foul for a block in the back.

### **Use of Hands or Arms by Defense: Passing Downs—ARTICLE 4**

#### **Approved Ruling 9-3-4**

- I. Before a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone is thrown, Team B holds eligible A1, who is beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Team B foul, holding. Penalty—10 yards and automatic first down, previous-spot enforcement.
- II. 3/15 @ B-45. QB A12 drops back and looks downfield for A88 who is the primary receiver and defender B21 is holding A88 at the B-35. A12 throws a forward pass to his checkdown receiver A44 but the ball falls incomplete at the B-46. **RULING:** A, 1/10, B-35, Snap. The penalty for B21's holding foul is enforced 10 yards from the previous spot and an automatic 1st down. Holding by defense carries an automatic first down.

## Section 4. Batting and Kicking

### Batting a Loose Ball—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 9-4-1

- I. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team A. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. The result of the play is a touchdown.
- II. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team B. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. The result of the play is a touchback. Safety if penalty is accepted.
- III. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the field of play. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. During regulation play, postscrimmage kick enforcement gives a safety by penalty. The ball remains alive, and normal scrimmage kick rules apply. Team A may elect the result of the play. If Team A recovers, does not score and accepts the penalty, or if the play occurs in an extra period, enforcement is at the previous spot.
- IV. Team A attempts a place kick on the try. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes out of bounds in the end zone. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Penalty—Half the distance from the previous spot. Postscrimmage kick rules do not apply on the try (Rule 10-2-3).
- V. Team A attempts a place kick on the try. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team A. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Team A may decline the penalty and scores two points.
- VI. Team A attempts a field goal, and B23, in the end zone, goes above the crossbar and catches the ball. **RULING:** Legal play.
- VII. Team A's fumble in flight is batted forward by B1, and the ball goes out of bounds behind Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Safety. Batting a fumble in flight does not add a new impetus (Rule 8-7-2-b). Team B foul. Penalty—10 yards.
- VIII. Team A's backward pass in flight is batted by B1, and the ball goes out of bounds behind Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Safety. A pass may be batted in any direction and the impetus is charged to Team A's pass (Rule 8-5-1-a).
- IX. A free kick is muffed in flight by a Team B player in his end zone. While the ball is loose in the end zone, a Team B player bats the ball out of the end zone. **RULING:** The result of the play is a touchback. Team B foul for illegally batting a ball in the end zone. Penalty—10 yards from the previous spot.
- X. After intercepting a legal forward pass at the B-20, B1 fumbles at the B-38. At the B-30, B2 illegally bats the loose ball, which goes forward and out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B foul. Penalty—10 yards from the spot of the foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the 20-yard line. No loss of down

is included in the penalty since Team B is awarded a new series after the penalty enforcement (Rule 5-1-1-e-1).

- XI. Team A is prepared to kick off. The ball is on the tee and the referee has signaled it ready for play. As the kicker approaches the ball it begins to roll off the tee just as he starts his kicking motion. The kicker follows through and kicks the ball as it continues to roll off or near the tee. **RULING:** No foul. This is not a violation of either 9-4-4 or 9-2-1-a-2-a. The officials should stop play and have the teams line up for a new kickoff. If weather conditions dictate, Team A should have a player hold the ball on the tee.

### **Illegally Kicking Ball—ARTICLE 4**

#### **Approved Ruling 9-4-4**

- I. 4/8 @ A-48. From a scrimmage kick formation, A32 punts the ball to the B-7 where it hits B25 on the leg. As the ball rolls along the ground, B25 then kicks it at the B-4 to prevent Team A from recovering. The ball bounces into Team B's end zone and over the end line. **RULING:** The result of the play is a safety, as B25's kicking the ball provides new impetus. Foul by B25 for illegally kicking the ball. Team A may decline the penalty and take the two points, or accept the penalty. The foul by B25 is governed by postscrimmage kick rules, so the accepted penalty would give Team B the ball at the B-2, first down and 10. (Rules 8-5-1-a and 8-7-2-b)

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# RULE 10

## Penalty Enforcement

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### Section 1. Penalties Completed

#### Offsetting Fouls—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 10-1-4

- I. On a Team A kickoff, Team B fouls before the untouched ball goes out of bounds between the goal lines. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls. Team A re-kicks at the previous spot.
- II. On a Team A kickoff from its 35-yard line, Team B fouls after the untouched ball goes out of bounds between the goal lines. **RULING:** Team B may elect a replay with Team A free-kicking at its 45-yard line. If Team B retains the ball, it will be at its 20-yard line, after the 15-yard penalty from its 35-yard line, or 15 yards behind the spot where the five-yard penalty against Team A left the ball (Rules 6-1-8 and 10-1-6).
- III. Team A is an illegal formation at the snap. A1's forward pass is intercepted by B1, who advances five yards and is tackled. Team B clips during B1's run. **RULING:** Team B has the option to accept offsetting fouls and repeat the down or to decline offsetting fouls and retain the ball after its penalty is completed. In the latter case Team A may accept or decline the penalty for Team B's clipping foul.
- IV. A1 throws an illegal forward pass and Team B is in the neutral zone at the snap. B23 intercepts the pass and B10 clips on the return. B23 is tackled in the field of play. **RULING:** No option. The fouls offset and the down is replayed. Team B may not decline offsetting fouls because it had fouled before getting possession of the ball.
- V. A1's forward pass is intercepted by B1, who advances and fumbles. B2 recovers and returns the ball five more yards. Team A fouls during or after the down, and Team B fouls during the fumble or during return by B2. **RULING:** If Team A's foul was a live-ball foul, Team B may select offsetting fouls and replay the down or select an option to retain the ball following the completion of the penalty for its foul. If Team A's foul was a dead-ball foul, Team B retains the ball after enforcement of both penalties.
- VI. Team A's legal forward pass is intercepted by B45, who advances several yards. On the return, B23 clips and A78 tackles B45 by pulling and twisting his face mask. **RULING:** Since Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, it may decline offsetting fouls and retain possession after completion of the clipping penalty.
- VII. A1 receives the snap while standing on his end line. Team B is offside at the snap. **RULING:** Team A's foul, out of bounds at the snap, offsets Team B's offside, and the down is repeated [Note: If Team B had not been offside, Team B could accept the penalty for Team A's foul or a safety (Rule 8-5-1-a)].

**Dead-Ball Fouls—ARTICLE 5****Approved Ruling 10-1-5**

- I. With fourth and eight, Team A gains four yards and the ball is declared dead, after which B1 is called for piling on. **RULING:** Team B personal foul. Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot. First and 10 for Team B (Rule 5-1-1-c). The clock starts on the snap.
- II. A personal foul occurs during action after a snap infraction that was made before the ball was ready for play. **RULING:** Every effort should be made to prevent any such premature snap and resulting action, but if such a foul does occur, it is between downs. Both penalties are enforced. If the personal foul is by Team B, there is likely a net of 10 yards for Team A. The penalty for Team B's foul carries an automatic first down.
- III. Second and goal at the three-yard line. Ball carrier A14 is downed at the one-yard line and then B67 piles on. A14 retaliates by punching B67. **RULING:** The penalties cancel since neither has been completed. A14 is ejected for fighting. Third and goal (Rule 10-1-1).

**Live-Ball—Dead-Ball Fouls—ARTICLE 6****Approved Ruling 10-1-6**

- I. Team A punts and is illegally in motion at the snap. The untouched ball goes out of bounds between the goal lines, after which Team B commits a personal foul. **RULING:** Possible options: (1) If Team B elects to replay the down, Team A will be penalized five yards at the previous spot followed by a 15-yard penalty against Team B, which includes an automatic first down. (2) Team B could decline the illegal-motion penalty and have the ball, first and 10 after a 15-yard penalty from the out-of-bounds spot. (3) Team B could accept the five-yard penalty enforced at the out of bounds spot (Rule 6-3-13) followed by the 15-yard penalty against Team B. In all options, the clock starts on the snap (Rule 3-3-2-d-8).
- II. Ball carrier B17 at Team A's 11-yard line taunts pursuing A55 before scoring a touchdown on an intercepted pass. After B17 crosses the goal line, he is tackled by A55 five yards into the end zone. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike conduct by B17 and A55. Both penalties are enforced. The penalty for B17's live-ball foul is enforced at the A-11, and that for the dead-ball foul by A55 is enforced at the succeeding spot. First and 10 for Team B at the A-13.
- III. B1 fouls during a down before B2 intercepts a legal forward pass. After the ball is declared dead, A1 piles on. **RULING:** Team A retains the ball after the penalty against Team B is enforced. Team A then will be penalized for the dead-ball foul (Rule 5-2-3).
- IV. Team B is offside on the snap at its three-yard line (not a try) and Team A throws a legal forward pass into Team B's end zone. Team B intercepts and runs 101 yards to Team A's end zone, after which Team A clips. **RULING:** Repeat the down with Team A putting the ball in play at the Team B 16-1/2-yard line.
- V. No fouls have occurred when Team B intercepts Team A's legal forward pass. On the runback, a Team B player clips. When the ball becomes dead, a Team A player piles on. **RULING:** Team B retains possession. Penalize

Team B for its clipping foul, followed by a penalty for Team A's dead-ball foul. The yardages will cancel unless one enforcement spot was inside the 30-yard line and enforcement was toward that goal.

- VI. Team A punts and commits a touching violation. B1 clips during the runback of the punt, which is fumbled by B2. A1 recovers the fumble, and A2 fouls after the ball is dead. **RULING:** Team A has the first option because Team B fouled during the live ball. If Team A declines the penalty for Team B's foul, Team B will have the ball at the point of the violation, along with the option of accepting enforcement of the penalty for Team A's dead-ball foul. If Team A accepts the penalty for Team B's foul, the ball will belong to Team B after enforcement of the penalty for its live-ball foul followed by the penalty against Team A for the dead-ball foul.

## Section 2. Enforcement Procedures

### Determining the Enforcement Spot and Basic Spot—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 10-2-2

- I. A kickoff untouched by Team B goes out of bounds after illegal touching by Team A. Team A is flagged for holding or a personal foul during the kick. **RULING:** Team B has these options: It may snap the ball at the spot of the illegal touching; accept a five-, 10- or 15-yard penalty from the previous spot with Team A re-kicking; snap the ball five, 10 or 15 yards beyond the spot where the ball went out of bounds; or snap the ball 30 yards beyond Team A's restraining line.
- II. A Team A fumble or backward pass is loose in Team A's end zone, where A33 kicks or bats the ball. **RULING:** Penalty—Safety (Rule 8-5-1-b).
- III. A55 clips in Team B's end zone during a scrimmage kick that touches B44 in the field of play. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards. Enforcement is either at the previous spot (Team A retaining possession) or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.
- IV. Team A punts from its end zone and the ball is returned to the A-30. A23 clips B35 in Team A's end zone during the return. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the basic spot, which is the end of the run (the A-30). Team B's ball, first and 10.
- V. Team A punts from its end zone and the ball is returned to the A-30 where it is fumbled. A23 clips in Team A's end zone during the fumble. The ball is recovered in the field of play. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the basic spot, which is the spot of the fumble, the A-30. Team B's ball, first and 10.
- VI. Team A's untouched punt from its end zone goes out of bounds at Team A's 40-yard line. A2, in his end zone, clips Team B before the ball is kicked. **RULING:** Penalty—Safety (Rule 9-1 Penalty) or Team B may snap the ball at the Team A 25-yard line after enforcement of the penalty from where the ball went out of bounds.
- VII. Team A snaps at its one-yard line, and ball carrier A1 is downed on his five-yard line. Team B commits a personal foul in the end zone while the ball is in play. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the basic spot (five-yard line).



- VIII. During a punt B1 holds A2 behind or beyond the neutral zone after the kick crosses the neutral zone and before it has touched Team B. **RULING:** Penalty—10 yards. Subject to postscrimmage kick enforcement if Team B is next to snap the ball.
- IX. During A1's run, B25 fouls 10 yards beyond the neutral zone. After advancing 30 yards, A1 fumbles. B48 recovers and carries the ball across Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Penalize Team B from the basic spot, which is the spot of the fumble. Team A retains possession of the ball (Rule 5-2-3).
- X. First and 10 at the A-30. A1 advances the ball to the B-40, where he is downed. During the run B1 clips on Team A's 45-yard line. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards at the B-40, which is the basic spot. First and 10 at the B-25.
- XI. First and 10 at the A-40. A1 advances to the B-40, where he fumbles. During A1's run or during the fumble B2 commits a personal foul at the 50-yard line. B1 recovers the fumble and returns the ball across Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the basic spot, which is the end of the related run (Team B's 40-yard line) and first down for Team A.
- XII. During the return of a scrimmage kick, B40 blocks A80 in the back above the waist at the B-25. Team B's ball carrier is downed with the ball in his possession at Team B's 40-yard line. **RULING:** Team B foul, illegal block in the back. Penalty—10 yards from the spot of the foul. Team B's ball, first and 10, from its 15-yard line.
- XIII. Team B intercepts a legal forward pass, and the player who threw the pass is fouled during the return. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first down and 10, after enforcement of the penalty (Rules 2-27-5, 5-2-4 and 9-1).
- XIV. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass (not a try) deep in his end zone and is unable to get out of the end zone, where he is downed. During the run, B2 clips A1 (a) at the B-25 (b) at the B-14; (c) in the end zone. **RULING:** The basic spot is the B-20. (a) First and 10 at the B-10. (b) First and 10 at the B-7. (c) Safety. (Rules 8-5-1-b, 8-6-1 and 10-2-2-d-2-a).
- XV. B17 intercepts a legal forward pass (not a try) deep in his end zone and, as he attempts to run the ball out, A19 clips in the end zone. After the foul and before B17 leaves the end zone, B17 fumbles with A26 recovering on the two-yard line. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the goal line. Team B's ball, first and 10 at its 15-yard line (Rule 10-2-2-d-2-c).
- XVI. After a safety, Team A punts the ball at Team A's 20-yard line. The ball goes out of bounds untouched by Team B. **RULING:** Team B captain has the choice of the down being repeated at the A-15, or of putting the ball in play at the 50-yard line or five yards beyond the inbounds spot.

### **Postscrimmage Kick Enforcement—ARTICLE 3**

#### **Approved Ruling 10-2-3**

- I. Either team fouls during a scrimmage kick after the ball has been touched beyond the neutral zone. The foul is beyond the neutral zone, and Team B will next put the ball in play. **RULING:** For fouls by Team B, penalty enforcement will be by the Three-and-One Principle with the postscrimmage kick spot as the basic spot (Rule 2-25-11). Team B's ball, first and 10. For fouls by Team A, penalty enforcement is either from the previous spot or from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (Rule 6-3-13).

- II. Team A's punt is blocked, crosses the neutral zone and is untouched by Team B beyond the neutral zone. It rebounds behind the neutral zone before Team B clips or holds. The ball is loose at the time of the foul. **RULING:** The foul is during the kick. If Team B is next to snap the ball, enforcement is according to postscrimmage kick rules.
- III. Team A's punt is blocked behind the neutral zone before clipping or holding by Team B beyond the neutral zone. The ball never crosses the neutral zone during the play. **RULING:** Rule 10-2-3 applies only when a scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone. Team A retains possession after the penalty is enforced at the previous spot.
- IV. Team A's successful field goal attempt is snapped at Team B's 30-yard line, and a Team B player fouls at the 20-yard line during the kick. **RULING:** Team A may decline the penalty and accept the score or void the score and have Team B penalized at the previous spot (Rule 10-2-5-d).
- V. Team A's untouched, unsuccessful field goal attempt is snapped from Team B's 30-yard line. Team B fouls at the 15-yard line during the kick. **RULING:** Team B's ball. The postscrimmage kick spot is at the 30-yard line and the enforcement is from the 15-yard line, the spot of the foul, with no possible replay (Rules 2-25-11 and 8-4-2-b).
- VI. Team A's punt crosses the neutral zone. During the kick, B79 holds A55 one yard beyond the neutral zone. B44 catches the kick at the B-25 and returns to the B-40 where he is tackled. **RULING:** B79's foul is covered by postscrimmage kick enforcement. The 10-yard penalty is enforced at the end of the kick, which is the B-25. First and 10 for Team B at the B-15.
- VII. Team A snaps the ball at the A-35 on fourth and 12. Just after the snap lineman B77 grabs guard A66 and pulls him to one side, allowing linebacker B43 to shoot the gap to try to block the kick. B44 catches the kick at the B-25 and returns to the B-40 where he is tackled. **RULING:** B77's holding foul is not covered by postscrimmage kick enforcement since it is before the kick. The 10-yard penalty is enforced at the previous spot. The penalty yardage alone does not give Team A a first down, but defensive holding includes an automatic first down. Therefore, Team A first and 10 at the A-45.

## Fouls During or After a Touchdown, Field Goal or Try—ARTICLE 5

### Approved Ruling 10-2-5

*Fouls during a touchdown or field goal by Team A:*

- I. During a touchdown run Team B clips in the field of play or the end zone. **RULING:** Team A has the option of the penalty being enforced on the try, succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot in extra periods (Rule 10-2-5-a-1).
- II. Team B commits a personal foul during a down when Team A scores a touchdown, and then Team A fouls after the score and before the ready-for-play signal on the try. **RULING:** Allow the score. Team A has the option of enforcement on the try, the succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot in extra periods. Team B then also has the option of Team A being penalized on the try, the succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot

- in extra periods. The yardage assessed on the live-ball/dead-ball penalties may cancel (Rule 10-2-5).
- III. Team B holds during Team A's touchdown run. Team A fouls after the score. **RULING:** Allow the score. The penalty for Team B's holding foul is declined by rule. Team B has the option of Team A being penalized on the try, the succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot in extra periods (Rules 10-2-5-a-2 and 10-2-5-c).
- IV. A Team B player punches an opponent during or after Team A's touchdown run. Team B is offside on the successful try. **RULING:** Allow the touchdown. Eject the Team B player for fighting. Team A has the option of a penalty against Team B on the try, the succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot in extra periods. After the successful try, Team A has the option of repeating the try with the offside penalty enforced on the try (Rules 10-2-5 and 8-3-3-b).
- V. Team B roughs the passer during a touchdown pass play. **RULING:** Allow the touchdown. Team A has the option of enforcement on the try, the succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- VI. Team B is offside during a successful field goal down. **RULING:** Team A has the option to accept the penalty at the previous spot and replay the down or to keep the points by declining the penalty.
- VII. Team B fouls on a successful field goal. **RULING:** Team A shall have the option of cancelling the score and have the penalty enforced from the previous spot or they may decline the penalty and accept the score. Team A may accept the score and have penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct enforced on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods.

*Fouls after a touchdown by Team A:*

- VIII. Team A fouls after it scores a touchdown, and Team B fouls on the successful try. **RULING:** Allow the touchdown. Team B has the option of Team A being penalized on the try or the succeeding kickoff. Team A then has the option of Team B being penalized on a replay of the try. Team B personal-foul penalties may be enforced on the subsequent kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. Yardages assessed on the succeeding kickoff may cancel.
- IX. Team A fouls after it scores a touchdown, and Team B fouls after a successful try. **RULING:** Allow the score. Team B has the option of Team A being penalized on the try, the succeeding kickoff, or from the succeeding spot in extra periods. For the foul after the try, Team B is penalized on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.

*Fouls during a try with no change of team possession (this does not include live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls or loss-of-down fouls):*

- X. Team B fouls during a successful try. **RULING:** Replay the down after enforcement, or the penalty is declined by rule. Penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls may be enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods (Rule 8-3-3-b-1).
- XI. Team B fouls during a successful try. **RULING:** Replay the down after enforcement, or the penalty is declined by rule. Penalties for personal fouls

may be enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods (Rule 8-3-3-b-1).

- XII. During a successful kick try from the three-yard line, Team B is offside. After the ball is dead, Team B commits a personal foul. **RULING:** If Team A elects to replay the try, both penalties against Team B are enforced before the snap (Rule 10-1-6). If Team A declines the offside penalty and accepts the point, the penalty for Team B's dead-ball foul is then enforced on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. (Rule 8-3-5)
- XIII. During an unsuccessful kick try from the three-yard line, Team A commits an illegal-motion foul. After the ball becomes dead, Team B fouls. **RULING:** Team B obviously will refuse the penalty for the Team A foul. Team B is penalized on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- Fouls after a try and before the succeeding kickoff:*
- XIV. Either team fouls. **RULING:** Enforce the penalty on the kickoff unless the try is the last down of the game.
- XV. Both teams foul before either penalty is completed. **RULING:** The fouls cancel.
- XVI. The penalty for Team B's foul after a successful try is accepted and will be enforced on the free kick; then:
1. Team A fouls after the try. **RULING:** Enforce the penalties in occurrence order on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.
  2. Team B fouls after the try. **RULING:** Enforce both Team B penalties in occurrence order on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.
  3. Both teams foul before either penalty is completed. **RULING:** These fouls cancel. The penalty for Team B's original foul is enforced on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.

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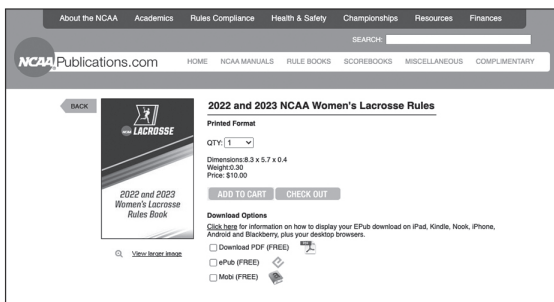
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