



IF

*i*

LOSE

I'LL RESPOND WITH RESPECT.



**RESPECT.**

It's the name of the game.

Don't undo my hard work  
with poor sportsmanship.

IF YOU THINK YOU OR YOUR TEAMMATE HAS HAD A  
**CONCUSSION**

**DON'T HIDE IT. • REPORT IT. • TAKE TIME TO RECOVER.**



**IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.**

**WHEN IN DOUBT, GET CHECKED OUT.**

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# **2022 NCAA® FOOTBALL RULES AND INTERPRETATIONS**

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**NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**



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# NCAA Football Rules Committee

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The chart below lists the members of the committee who voted on and approved the rules included in this edition of the book. This information is being included for historical purposes.

Name	Institution	Term Expiration
Aaron Best	Eastern Washington University	9-1-24***
Bill Carollo	Big Ten Conference	9-1-22
Stan Hodgin	Shenandoah University	9-1-24
Jason Carmichael	University of West Georgia	9-1-25
Zac Selmon	University of Oklahoma	9-1-23
David Shaw*	Stanford University	9-1-22
Steve Shaw**	Secretary-Rules Editor	9-1-25***
Kirby Smart	University of Georgia	9-1-25
Rich Wanninger	Patriot League	9-1-25
John Wristen	Colorado State University, Pueblo	9-1-25
Doug Zipp	Ohio Wesleyan University	9-1-22
Bill Zwaan	West Chester University	9-1-22

\*Committee chair

\*\*Non-voting member

\*\*\*Eligible for reappointment

For a complete and current listing of the NCAA Football Rules Committee, please go to: [www.NCAA.org/playingrules](http://www.NCAA.org/playingrules).

Those who find it necessary to contact the editor for interpretations of rules, play situations or for information and guidance regarding officiating, may send an e-mail to the address below. Requests should be sent to:

**STEVE SHAW**

Secretary-Rules Editor

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# Major Rules Changes for 2022

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The numbers and letters in the left column refer to rule, section and article, respectively. Changed or altered items are identified in the rules by a blue shaded background, unless the change results in the deletion of the entire segment containing the change.

This is a year in which playing rules changes are allowed. The 2023 season will be an “off-year” in the playing rules cycle; however, the committee is able to make changes for the following reasons during this period:

1) Student-athlete safety; 2) Adjustment to a rule change from the previous season that is not achieving its intent; or 3) Changes that have a significant impact on the image of the game.

The Football Rules Committee made the following major changes for the 2022 season:

## MAJOR RULES CHANGES for 2022

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 3-3-5-b     | Feigning injury findings sent to conference office for further action.   |
| 4-1-3-r     | Ball declared dead when a ball carrier simulates or fakes a feet-first slide.  |
| 6-5-4       | Illegal block or contact by a player after a fair catch signal is now a 10-yard penalty.                               |
| 7-3-11      | Illegal touching penalty is five yards; now includes a loss of down.   |
| 9-1-3/9-1-4 | Appeal option added for a confirmed second-half targeting foul in games involving instant replay.                      |
| 9-1-6       | Blocking below the waist now restricted to inside the tackle box.  |
| 9-2-1-a-1   | Enhanced penalty options for Team B unsportsmanlike conduct fouls during pass plays added.                             |
| 9-3-4 (c-e) | Defensive holding penalties include a first down when accepted (this change eliminates previous 9-3-5 and 10-2-2-e-2). |

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# Index to Editorial Changes

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## SIGNIFICANT EDITORIAL CHANGES for 2022

1-4-5-a	Allowing city and/or state of the institution in jersey design.
1-4-6-d	Area allowed for insignia expanded by PROP.
1-4-11-b	Coaches' booth space further clarified and codifying remote coaching prohibition.
2-27-14-a	Defenseless player: Passer further defined.
3-2-4-c-6	Free kick play clock exception.
3-5-3-b	Team B substitution approved ruling references added.
6-3-13	Clarifying the basic spot on fouls by kicking team.
6-5-1-b	Clarifying possession after a fair catch signal.
7-2-5-b	Dead-ball spot of a fumble at rest altered.
9-1 Pen.	Added illegal blind-side block signal.
9-1-3	Crown of the helmet redefined.
9-1-4 Note 2	Defenseless player: Passer further defined.
9-1-15	Enhanced description of horse-collar tackle.
9-1-16-a-4	Expanded definition of when a kicker's protection ends.
9-1-16 Pen.	Including holder in penalty description.
10-2-4	Clarifying the basic spot on fouls by kicking team.
12-3	Position of the ball in relation to the goal line reviewable.
12-3-2-f	Location of the ball in relation to the goal line with grounding.
12-3-6-b	Instant replay clock adjustment modified.
12-3-6-d-3	Restoring time at end of game clarified.
12-5-1-b-4	Coaches' challenge modified.
12-6-1-e	O2O may be used to facilitate the review process.

## APPENDIX CHANGE for 2022

Appendix F Addition of signal 28: Illegal blind-side block.



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# Points of Emphasis

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The NCAA Football Rules Committee has extraordinary pride in the Football Code, which was introduced in 1916 and has been updated several times. These guidelines form a harmony of agreement among coaches, players, game officials and administrators that places each contest in an environment of fairness and sportsmanship. It is noted that the Code emphasizes the following unethical practices: “Using the helmet as a weapon. The helmet is for protection of the player...” and “players and coaches should emphasize the elimination of targeting and initiating contact against a defenseless opponent and/or with the crown of the helmet.” Every participant in the collegiate football scene shares a responsibility for ethical conduct that enhances the future of this American tradition.

**PROTECTION OF DEFENSELESS PLAYERS / TARGETING**—The NCAA Football Rules Committee continues to embrace the targeting rule in order to promote player safety, reduce head contact and eliminate specific targeting actions from the game. The language in 9-1-3 and 9-1-4 stipulates that no player shall target and make forcible contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless player or contact an opponent with the crown (top) of their helmet. The definition of “crown of the helmet,” approved starting with the 2022 season, focuses the attention on the top of the helmet. The term “forcible contact” has replaced the word “initiate” to ensure the intent of the rule is clear.

These actions appear in two rules: Targeting and Making Forcible Contact With the Crown of the Helmet (Rule 9-1-3) and Targeting and Making Forcible Contact to Head or Neck Area of a Defenseless Player (Rule 9-1-4). Use of the helmet as a weapon and intentional (targeted) contact to the head or neck area are serious safety concerns. The penalties for fouls under both 9-1-3 and 9-1-4 include automatic disqualification. The committee continues to emphasize that coaches and officials must be diligent to insure that players understand and abide by these rules. A progressive penalty was added in 2019 to continue to emphasize adherence to this rule. Rule 2-27-14 defines and lists characteristics of a defenseless player.

An appeal process has been established starting with the 2022 season for players disqualified for targeting in the second half of a game. If the national coordinator concludes that it is clearly obvious the player should not have been disqualified, the conference may vacate the following game suspension.

**CONCUSSIONS**—Coaches and medical personnel should exercise caution in the treatment of a student-athlete who exhibits signs of a concussion. When in question, officials will declare an injury timeout for any player exhibiting signs of a concussion. See Appendix C for detailed information.

## **DISCONCERTING SIGNALS & PRE-SNAP ACTIONS**

The intent of pre-snap rules is to define and govern what is allowed by the offense and defense. The offense, by design, has an advantage of knowing the starting signal, cadence, or sound, and the defense has an advantage as they are not limited in terms of overall player movements before the snap. To discourage tactics at the line of scrimmage designed to cause an opponent to foul or to give either team an unmerited advantage, officials must be on high alert for any type of illegal pre-snap actions by either team. Additionally, coaches should not teach illegal pre-snap actions designed to make their opponent foul.

These actions can sometimes be difficult to observe or hear in our noisy stadiums; therefore, officials must be on high alert to stop these illegal actions. For the offense, focus should be on any movement by one or more players that simulate the start of a play. Special attention should be directed to the quarterback for action that includes any quick, jerky, or abrupt movement that simulates action at the snap.

On the defensive side of the ball, officials should pay special attention to sounds and actions that could create a disruption to the offense's starting signal or cause the offense to false start. This includes defenders near the line of scrimmage that make quick, abrupt, or exaggerated actions that are not part of normal defensive movement. The defense may move, but the movements may not simulate action at the snap. Additionally, the defense cannot use words or signals that simulate the sound or cadence of, or otherwise interfere with, the offensive starting signals. This includes using a clap on the defensive side of the ball that may disconcert the offense.

**FEIGNING AN INJURY**—With the advent of the up-tempo offenses, there is a growing trend of defensive players feigning an injury in an attempt to slow down or break the rhythm of the offense and try to gain an unwarranted time out. Full protection under the rules should go to a player that indeed suffers an injury; however, on occasion some potential injuries are suspect, happen in unusual windows between plays and appear to be staged. The Rules Committee had serious discussions on potential options on how to best take away incentive for players to feign an injury including adding additional time before a player could return from injury.

Head Coaches are expected to set a culture within their team to ensure that this type dishonest action will not be tolerated. Feigning an injury is not ethical and is completely against the spirit of fair competition. It is a bad look for our great game.

For the 2022 season, the Rules Committee has authorized an administrative process for questionable game action. An institution or conference has the option to consult the national coordinator of football officials who would then facilitate a video review. After the review, the national coordinator will communicate any findings to the conference office for further action.

Special attention is directed to the strongly-worded statement in The Football Code (coaching ethics, section g).

**UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT / TAUNTING**—Currently the Rules Committee is satisfied with the solid judgement that officials are demonstrating

evaluating celebration issues and this focus will continue. For the 2022 season, it will be a point of emphasis for officials to penalize any taunting action that is directed at an opponent. These actions are a bad look for the game and can lead to unnecessary confrontations between the teams and must be eliminated.

The pregame warm-up rules are designed to ensure proper sportsmanship before our contests. Officials should be vigilant during the pregame whenever players are on the field. Unsportsmanlike acts before the game are detrimental to the sport and must be cleaned up.

**SIDELINE CONTROL**—Coaches that need to have conversations with officials about specific rulings within the game must do so from the Team Area. Coaches are encouraged not to enter the field of play or leave the Team Area to debate officiating decisions, and those that do so will have committed an automatic Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul.

Coaches will be allowed to only step to the sideline to call offensive and defensive signals after all action has ceased. That working space (six-foot white border) is intended to allow officials to adequately perform their duties; to protect the safety of officials, players and coaches; and to allow teams to demonstrate good sportsmanship within the team area. Special attention should be given to the rule stating that if a coach receives two unsportsmanlike fouls in a single game, they are ejected.

The NCAA Football Rules Committee and Division I Competition Committee has instructed officials to be more diligent in their observations of these actions and they are instructed to flag violations of the rule when it occurs in an area they can observe. Coaches are expected to set an appropriate, professional example for their players, fans and the many others who watch the game and to intervene when they see members of their team exhibit behavior that is not acceptable under the Sportsmanship guidelines of the Football Code.

**ILLEGAL CONTACT AGAINST A QUARTERBACK / PASSER**—Because of their position, the passer is often in a vulnerable position, with little or no opportunity to protect themselves from, or to prepare for, forcible contact. In recognition of this, there is an explicit rule (Rule 9-1-9) which addresses this unique situation: “No defensive player shall unnecessarily rough a passer when it is obvious the ball has been thrown.”

The rule then lists several specific acts which are illegal when they occur against a passer or potential passer. The NCAA Football Rules Committee over time has given options for the quarterback to protect himself, such as sliding feet first and to legally throw the ball away outside the tackle box. The definition of a defenseless player-passer has been expanded to include an offensive player in a passing posture with focus downfield. Because of the extremely vulnerable situation the quarterback position presents, it is important for all officials, and the Referee and the Center Judge in particular, to be a presence and recognize when a passer is threatened or is in a defenseless position. The crew must make it a priority to afford the quarterback all the protection the rules provide.

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# Statement on Sportsmanship

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## NCAA Football Rules Committee

- After reviewing a number of plays involving unsportsmanlike conduct, the committee is firm in its support of the unsportsmanlike conduct rules as they currently are written and officiated. Many of these fouls deal with players who taunt their opponent or inappropriately draw attention to themselves in a premeditated, excessive or prolonged manner. Players should be taught the discipline that reinforces football as a team game.
- The rules committee reminds head coaches of their responsibility for the behavior of their players before and after, as well as during, the game. Players must be cautioned against pre-game unsportsmanlike conduct on the field that can lead to confrontation between the teams. Such action can lead to penalties enforced on the opening kickoff, possibly including disqualification of players. Repeated occurrence of such unsportsmanlike behavior by a team may result in punitive action by the conference against the head coach and their institution.

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# The Football Code

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Football is an aggressive, rugged contact sport. Only the highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. There is no place for unfair tactics, unsportsmanlike conduct or maneuvers deliberately designed to inflict injury.

The American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Code of Ethics states:

- a. The Football Code shall be an integral part of this code of ethics and should be carefully read and observed.
- b. To gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules brands a coach or player as unfit to be associated with football.

Through the years, the rules committee has endeavored by rule and appropriate penalty to prohibit all forms of unnecessary roughness, unfair tactics and unsportsmanlike conduct. But rules alone cannot accomplish this end. Only the continued best efforts of coaches, players, officials and all friends of the game can preserve the high ethical standards that the public has a right to expect in America's foremost collegiate sport. Therefore, as a guide to players, coaches, officials and others responsible for the welfare of the game, the committee publishes the following code:

## Coaching Ethics

Deliberately teaching players to violate the rules is indefensible. The coaching of intentional holding, beating the ball, illegal shifting, feigning injury, interference, illegal forward passing or intentional roughing will break down rather than aid in the building of the character of players. Such instruction is not only unfair to one's opponent but is demoralizing to the players entrusted to a coach's care and has no place in a game that is an integral part of an educational program.

The following are unethical practices:

- a. Changing numbers during the game to deceive the opponent.
- b. Using the football helmet as a weapon. The helmet is for the protection of the player.
- c. Targeting and making forcible contact. Players, coaches and officials should emphasize the elimination of targeting and making forcible contact against a defenseless opponent and/or with the crown of the helmet.
- d. Using nontherapeutic drugs in the game of football. This is not in keeping with the aims and purposes of amateur athletics and is prohibited.
- e. "Beating the ball" by an unfair use of a starting signal. This is nothing less than deliberately stealing an advantage from the opponent. An honest starting signal is needed, but a signal that has for its purpose starting the team a fraction of a second before the ball is put in play, in the hope that it will not be detected by the officials, is illegal. It is the same as if a sprinter in a 100-meter dash had a secret arrangement

with the starter to give themselves a tenth-of-a-second warning before firing the pistol.

- f. Shifting in a way that simulates the start of a play or employing any other unfair tactic for the purpose of drawing one's opponent offside. This can be construed only as a deliberate attempt to gain an unmerited advantage.
- g. Feigning an injury for any reason is unethical. An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules. Such tactics cannot be tolerated among sportsmen of integrity.

### **Talking to an Opponent**

Talking to an opponent in any manner that is demeaning, vulgar, abusive or "trashy" or intended to incite a physical response or verbally put an opponent down is illegal. Coaches are urged to discuss this conduct frequently and support all officials' actions to control it.

### **Talking to Officials**

When an official imposes a penalty or makes a decision, they are doing their duty as they see fit. Officials are on the field to uphold the integrity of the game of football, and their decisions are final and conclusive and should be accepted by players and coaches.

The AFCA Code of Ethics states:

- a. On- and off-the-record criticism of officials to players or to the public shall be considered unethical.
- b. For a coach to address, or permit anyone on their bench to address, uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the progress of a game, or to indulge in conduct that might incite players or spectators against the officials, is a violation of the rules of the game and must likewise be considered conduct unworthy of a member of the coaching profession.

### **Holding**

Illegal use of the hand or arm is unfair play, eliminates skill and does not belong in the game. The object of the game is to advance the ball by strategy, skill and speed without illegally holding your opponent. All coaches and players should thoroughly understand the rules for proper offensive and defensive use of the hands. Holding is a frequently called penalty; it is important to emphasize the severity of the penalty.

### **Sportsmanship**

The football player or coach who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct; and whether or not they escape being penalized, these actions discredit to the good name of the game, which is their duty as a player or coach to uphold.

NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE

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# Part I:

## The Rules

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NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations have been designated as either administrative rules or conduct rules. Typically, administrative rules are those dealing with preparation for the contest. Conduct rules are those that have to do directly with the playing of the contest. Some administrative rules (as indicated) may be altered by the mutual consent of the competing institutions. Others (as indicated) are unalterable. No conduct rule may be changed by mutual consent. All NCAA member institutions are required, as a condition of membership, to conduct their intercollegiate contests according to these rules.

**In the NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations, administrative rules that may be altered by mutual consent of the institutions include:**

3-2-1-b	3-3-3-c and d
3-2-2-a	11-2-1

**Administrative rules that may not be altered include:**

1-1-1-a	1-2-7-a, b, e and f
1-1-2	1-2-8-a-d
1-1-3-a and b	1-2-9-a and b
1-1-4	1-3-1
1-1-5	1-3-2-b, c, e and f
1-1-6	1-3-2-d Exception
1-1-7	1-4-3
1-2-1	1-4-7
1-2-1-a-d, h, k and l	1-4-9
1-2-2	1-4-12
1-2-3-a and b	3-2-4
1-2-4-a-e	3-3-3-e
1-2-5	11-1
1-2-6	11-2-2

**Administrative rules that may be altered by game management without mutual consent include:**

1-2-1-a Exception	1-2-7-c and d
1-2-1-e, f, g, i and j	1-3-2-d
1-2-4-f	
1-2-5-c Exception	

**All other rules are conduct rules and may not be altered.**

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# RULE 1

## The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

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### SECTION 1. General Provisions

#### The Game

ARTICLE 1. a. The game shall be played between two teams of not more than 11 players each, on a rectangular field and with an inflated ball having the shape of a prolate spheroid.

b. A team legally may play with fewer than 11 players, but a foul for an illegal formation occurs if the following requirements are not met:

1. When the ball is free-kicked, at least four Team A players are on each side of the kicker (Rule 6-1-2-c-3).
2. At the snap, at least five players wearing jerseys numbered 50 through 79 are on the offensive scrimmage line and no more than four players are in the backfield (Rules 2-21-2, 2-27-4 and 7-1-4-a) (**Exception:** Rule 7-1-4-a-5) (A.R. 7-1-4-IV-VI).

#### Goal Lines

ARTICLE 2. Goal lines, one for each team, shall be established at opposite ends of the field of play, and each team shall be allowed opportunities to advance the ball across the other team's goal line by running, passing or kicking it.

#### Winning Team and Final Score

ARTICLE 3. a. The teams shall be awarded points for scoring according to rule and, unless the game is forfeited, the team having the larger score at the end of the game shall be the winning team.

b. When the referee declares that the game is ended, the score is final.

#### Game Officials

ARTICLE 4. The game shall be played under the supervision of the game officials as specified in Rule 11.

#### Team Captains

ARTICLE 5. Each team shall designate to the referee not more than four players as its field captain(s). One player at a time shall speak for their team in all dealings with the officials.

#### Persons Subject to the Rules

ARTICLE 6. a. All persons subject to the rules are governed by the decisions of the officials.



- b. Those persons subject to the rules are: Everyone in the team area, players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, athletics trainers, cheerleaders, band members, mascots, public-address announcers, audio/video/lighting system operators, and other persons affiliated with the teams or institutions.

### **Member Institutions Subject to the Rules**

ARTICLE 7. a. NCAA member institutions and affiliated officiating organizations shall conduct all contests under the official football-playing rules of the Association.

- b. NCAA-affiliated officiating organizations shall use the current Football Officials Manual published under the jurisdiction of the College Football Officiating, LLC (CFO).
- c. NCAA member institutions and affiliated officiating organizations not complying with NCAA football-playing rules are subject to sanctions (See appropriate divisional NCAA Manual).

## **SECTION 2. The Field**

### **Dimensions and Markings**

ARTICLE 1. The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and pylons as indicated in Appendix D.

- a. All field-dimension lines shown must be white and 4 inches in width (**Exceptions:** Sidelines and end lines may exceed 4 inches in width, goal lines may be 4 or 8 inches in width, and Rule 1-2-1-g).
- b. Twenty-four-inch short yard-line extensions, four inches inside the sidelines and at the hash marks, are mandatory; and all yard lines shall be four inches from the sidelines (Rule 2-12-6).
- c. A solid white area between the sideline and the coaching line is mandatory.
- d. White field markings or contrasting decorative markings (e.g., team names) are permissible in the end zones but shall not be closer than four feet to any line.
- e. Contrasting coloring in the end zones may abut any line.
- f. Only these contrasting decorative markings are allowed: conference logo, NCAA logo, college or university name and logo, and team name and logo. These are permissible within the sidelines and between the goal lines, under these conditions (See Appendix D):
  1. The entirety of all yard lines, goal lines, and sidelines must be clearly visible. No portion of any such line may be obscured by decorative markings.
  2. No such markings may touch or enclose the hash marks or numbers.
  3. A single decorative marking, centered on the 50-yard line, and a maximum of four smaller flanking decorative markings are allowed.
- g. Goal lines may be of one contrasting color from the white lines.
- h. Advertising is prohibited on the field except as follows:
  1. For postseason and neutral-site games the title sponsor whose name is associated with the name of that game may advertise on the field, with the restriction that there be a maximum of three such advertisements: a single advertisement centered on the 50-yard line and no more than two smaller flanking advertisements. These advertisements must

adhere to paragraph f above. No other advertisements, either by the title sponsor or by any other commercial entity, may be on the field.

2. The NCAA Football logo is permitted.
3. If a commercial entity or individual has purchased naming rights to the facility, that entity's or individual's name/company-specific font or logo may be painted on the field in no more than two of the flanking locations and will count in the total of the maximum of four flanking locations allowed.
  - i. White field yard-line numbers not larger than 6 feet in height and 4 feet in width, with the tops of the numbers nine yards from the sidelines, are recommended.
  - j. White directional arrows next to the field numbers (except the 50) indicating the direction toward the nearest goal line are recommended. The arrow is a triangle with an 18-inch base and two sides that are 36 inches each.
  - k. The two hash marks are 60 feet from the sidelines. Hash marks and short yard-line extensions shall measure 24 inches in length.
  - l. Nine-yard marks 12 inches in length, every 10 yards, shall be located nine yards from the sidelines. They are not required if the field is numbered according to Rule 1-2-1-i.

### Marking Boundary Areas

ARTICLE 2. Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the boundary markings. The entire width of each goal line is in the end zone.

### Limit Lines

- ARTICLE 3. a. Limit lines shall be marked with 12-inch lines and at 24-inch intervals 12 feet outside the sidelines and the end lines, except in stadiums where total field surface does not permit. In these stadiums, the limit lines shall not be less than six feet from the sidelines and end lines. Limit lines shall be 4 inches in width and may be yellow. Limit lines designating team areas shall be solid lines.
- b. No person outside the team area shall be inside the limit lines. Game management personnel have the responsibility and the authority to enforce this rule. (**Exception:** Hand-held cameras under the supervision of the television partners may briefly be between the limit lines and the sideline after the ball is dead and the game clock has been stopped. This exception does not allow cameras to be on the field of play or in the end zone at any time.)
  - c. Limit lines shall also be marked six feet from the team area around the side and back of the team area, if the stadium permits.

### Team Area and Coaching Box

ARTICLE 4. a. On each side of the field, a team area in back of the limit line and between the 20-yard lines shall be marked for the exclusive use of substitutes, athletics trainers and other persons affiliated with the team. The front of the coaching box shall be marked with a solid line six feet outside the sideline between the 20-yard lines. The area between the coaching line and the limit line between the 20-yard lines shall contain white diagonal lines or be marked distinctly for use of coaches (Rule 9-2-5). A 4-inch-by-4-inch mark is

mandatory at each five-yard line extended between the goal lines as an extension of the coaching line for line-to-gain and down indicator six-foot reference points.

- b. The team area shall be limited to squad members in full uniform (see Appendix D) and a maximum of 50 other individuals directly involved in the game. All persons in the team area are subject to the rules and are governed by decisions of the officials (Rule 1-1-6). The 50 individuals not in full uniform shall wear special team area credentials numbered 1 through 50. No other credentials are permitted. Medical personnel are exempted from the 50-credential limit and should have a separate, distinct pass.
- c. Coaches are permitted in the coaching box (see Appendix D), which is the area bounded by the limit line and coaching line between the 20-yard lines.
- d. No media personnel, including journalists, radio and television personnel, or their equipment, shall be in the team area or coaching box, and no media personnel shall communicate in any way with persons in the team area or coaching box. In stadiums where the team area extends to the spectator seating area, a pass-through area should be made available for media to move from one end of the field to the other on both sides of the field.
- e. Game management personnel shall remove all persons not authorized by rule.
- f. Practice kicking nets are not permitted outside the team area (**Exception:** In stadiums where playing enclosures are limited in size, nets, holders and kickers are permitted outside the team area and outside the limit line) (Rule 9-2-1-b-1).

## Goals

ARTICLE 5. a. Each goal shall consist of two white or yellow uprights extending at least 30 feet above the ground with a connecting white or yellow horizontal crossbar, the top of which is 10 feet above the ground. The inside of the uprights and crossbar shall be in the same vertical plane as the inside edge of the end line. Each goal is out of bounds (see Appendix D).

- b. Above the crossbar, the uprights shall be white or yellow and 18 feet, six inches apart inside to inside.
- c. The designated uprights and crossbar shall be free of decorative material (**Exception:** 4-inch-by-42-inch orange or red wind directional streamers at the top of the uprights are permitted).
- d. The height of the crossbar shall be measured from the top of each end of the crossbar to the ground directly below.
- e. Goal posts shall be padded with resilient material from the ground to a height of at least six feet. Advertising is prohibited on the goals. One manufacturer's logo or trademark is permitted on each goal post pad. Institutional and conference logos are allowed.
- f. The home team is responsible for the availability of a portable goal if original goals are removed during the game for any reason.

## Pylons

ARTICLE 6. Soft, flexible four-sided pylons 4 inches by 4 inches with an overall height of 18 inches, which may include a 2-inch space between the bottom of the pylon and the ground, are required. They shall be red or orange in color. One manufacturer's logo or trademark is permitted on each pylon. Institutional

logos, conference logos and the name/commercial logo of the title sponsor of postseason games are also allowed. Any such marking may not extend more than 3 inches on any side. They are placed at the inside corners of the eight intersections of the sidelines with the goal lines and end lines. The pylons marking the intersections of the end lines and hash marks extended shall be placed three feet off the end lines.

### **Line-to-Gain and Down Indicators**

ARTICLE 7. The official line-to-gain (yardage chain) and down indicators shall be operated approximately six feet outside the sideline except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. These must be operated on the side of the field opposite the press box.

- a. The yardage chain shall join two rods not fewer than 5 feet high, the rods' inside edges being exactly 10 yards apart when the chain is fully extended.
- b. The down indicator shall be mounted on a rod not fewer than 5 feet high operating approximately six feet outside the sideline opposite the press box.
- c. An unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain indicator and an unofficial down indicator six feet outside the other sideline are recommended.
- d. Unofficial red or orange nonslip line-to-gain ground markers positioned off the sidelines on both sides of the field are recommended. Markers are rectangular, weighted material 10 inches by 32 inches. A triangle with an altitude of 5 inches is attached to the rectangle at the end toward the sideline.
- e. All line-to-gain and down-indicator rods shall have flat ends.
- f. Advertising is prohibited on the down and line-to-gain indicators. One manufacturer's logo or trademark is permitted on each indicator. Institutional and conference logos are allowed.

### **Markers or Obstructions**

ARTICLE 8. a. All markers and obstructions within the playing enclosure shall be placed or constructed in such a manner as to avoid any possible hazard to players. This includes anything dangerous to anyone at the limit lines.

- b. After the officials' pregame inspection of the playing enclosure, the referee shall order removed any hazardous obstructions or markers located inside the limit lines.
- c. The referee shall report to game management personnel any markers or obstructions constituting a hazard within the playing enclosure but outside the limit lines. Final determination of corrective action shall be the responsibility of game management personnel.
- d. After the officials have completed their pregame inspection of the playing enclosure, it is the responsibility of game management personnel to ensure that the playing enclosure remains safe throughout the game.

### **Field Surface**

ARTICLE 9. a. No material or device shall be used to improve or degrade the playing surface or other conditions and give one player or team an advantage (*Exceptions:* Rules 2-16-4-b and c).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S19].**

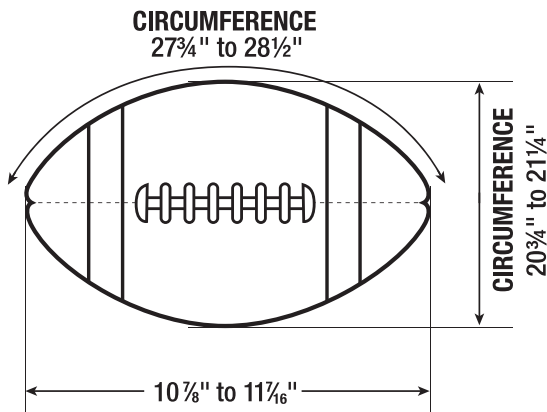
- b. The referee may require any improvement in the field necessary for proper and safe game administration.

### SECTION 3. The Ball

#### Specifications

ARTICLE 1. The ball shall meet the following specifications:

- a. New or nearly new. (A nearly new ball is a ball that has not been altered and retains the properties and qualities of a new ball.)
- b. Cover consisting of four panels of pebble-grained leather without corrugations other than seams.



- c. One set of eight equally spaced laces.
- d. Natural tan color.
- e. Two 1-inch white stripes that are three to three-and-one-quarter inches from the end of the ball and located only on the two panels adjacent to the laces.
- f. Conforms to maximum and minimum dimensions and shape indicated in the accompanying diagram.
- g. Inflated to the pressure of 12-1/2 to 13-1/2 pounds per square inch (psi).
- h. Weight of 14 to 15 ounces.
- i. The ball may not be altered. This includes the use of any ball-drying or ball-warming substance. Mechanical ball-drying and ball-warming devices are not permitted near the sidelines or in the team area.
- j. Professional football league logos are prohibited.
- k. Advertising is prohibited on the ball [**Exceptions:** (1) Ball manufacturer's name or logo, (2) institutional logo, (3) conference/NCAA logo, (4) AFCA logo and (5) College Football Playoff logo].

## Administration and Enforcement

ARTICLE 2. a. The game officials shall test and be sole judge of not more than 10 balls offered for play by each team before and during the game. The game officials may approve additional balls if warranted by conditions.

- b. Home management shall provide a pressure pump and measuring device.
- c. The home team is responsible for providing legal balls and should notify the opponent of the ball to be used.
- d. During the entire game, either team may use a new or nearly new ball of its choice when it is in possession, providing the ball meets the required specifications and has been measured and tested according to rule (*Exception:* The official NCAA football shall be used for the Division I Football Championship Subdivision, II and III championships).
- e. The visiting team is responsible for providing the legal balls it wishes to use while it is in possession if the balls provided by the home team are not acceptable.
- f. All balls to be used must be presented to the referee for testing at least 60 minutes before the start of the game. Once the teams have presented the game balls to the referee, they remain under the general supervision of the officials throughout the game.
- g. When the ball becomes dead in a side zone, is unfit for play, is subject to measurement in a side zone or is inaccessible, a replacement ball shall be obtained from a ball person (A.R. 1-3-2-1).
- h. The referee or umpire shall determine the legality of each ball before it is put in play.
- i. The following procedures shall be used when measuring a ball:
  - 1. All measurements shall be made after the ball is legally inflated.
  - 2. The long circumference shall be measured around the ends of the ball but not over the laces.
  - 3. The long diameter shall be measured with calipers from end to end but not in the nose indentation.
  - 4. The short circumference shall be measured around the ball, over the valve and over the lace but not over the cross lace.

## Marking Balls

ARTICLE 3. Marking a ball indicating a preference for any player or any situation is prohibited.

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. 15 yards from the previous spot [S27].**

## SECTION 4. Players and Playing Equipment

### Recommended Numbering

ARTICLE 1. It is strongly recommended that offensive players be numbered according to the following diagram that shows one of many offensive formations:



### Players' Numbering

ARTICLE 2. a. All players shall be numbered 0 through 99. Any number preceded by the digit zero such as "07" or "00" is illegal.

- b. No two players of the same team shall participate in the same down wearing identical numbers.
- c. Markings in the vicinity of the numbers are not permitted.

**PENALTY [a-c]—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S23].**

- d. When a player enters the game after changing their jersey number, the player must report to the referee. The officiating crew informs the opposing head coach and the referee announces the change. A player who enters the game after changing their number and does not report commits a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. [S27]. (A.R. 1-4-2-1)

**PENALTY [d]—Live-ball foul. 15 yards from the previous spot [S27]. Flagrant offenders shall be ejected [S47].**

### Mandatory Equipment

ARTICLE 3. All players must wear the following mandatory equipment:

- a. Helmet.
- b. Hip pads.
- c. Jersey.
- d. Knee pads.
- e. Mouthpiece.
- f. Pants.
- g. Shoulder pads.
- h. Socks.
- i. Thigh guards.

### Specifications: Mandatory Equipment

ARTICLE 4. a. *Helmets.* 1. The helmet must be fitted with a facemask and a secured four- or six-point chin strap, all points of which must be secured whenever the ball is in play.

2. Helmets for all players of a team must be of the same color and design.
  3. Helmets must carry a warning label regarding the risk of injury and a manufacturer's or reconditioner's certification indicating satisfaction of National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) test standards. Reconditioned helmets shall show recertification to indicate satisfaction with the NOCSAE test standard.
- b. *Hip Pads.* Hip pads must include a tailbone protector.

- c. *Jersey.* See Rule 1-4-5
- d. *Knee Pads.* Knee pads must be covered by pants. Furthermore, the pants and knee pads must cover the knees. No pads or protective equipment may be worn outside the pants. (See Appendix E.)
- e. *Mouthpiece.* The mouthpiece must be an intra-oral device of any readily visible color. It must not be white or transparent. It must be made with FDA-approved base materials (FDCS) and cover all upper teeth. It is recommended that the mouthpiece be properly fitted.
- f. *Pants.* Players of a team must wear pants of the same color and design.
- g. *Shoulder pads.* There are no specifications for shoulder pads. (See Appendix E)
- h. *Socks.* Players of a team must wear socks or leg coverings that are identical in color and design (**Exceptions:** Unaltered knee braces, tape or a bandage to protect or prevent an injury, and barefoot kickers).
- i. *Thigh guards.* There are no specifications for thigh guards. (See Appendix E)

### Jersey Design, Color and Numerals

#### ARTICLE 5. a. Design.

1. The jersey must have sleeves that completely cover the shoulder pads. It must not be altered or designed to tear. The jersey must be full-length and tucked into the pants or made even with the waistline. No other undergarment (e.g., T-shirt) shall extend below the waistline at the torso. It must cover all pads worn at or above the waist. A second jersey meeting all requirements of Rule 1-4-5 worn concurrently is allowed. Vests and/or altered jerseys with zippers, Velcro, clasps or other fasteners are not allowed.
2. Other than the player's number, the jersey may only contain:
  - Player's name;
  - School name;
  - City and/or state of the institution;
  - Mascot name;
  - NCAA logo;
  - Sleeve stripes;
  - Logo for school, conference, mascot, postseason-game, memorial, the military;
  - Graduate or academic recognition as part of an institutional or conference logo;
  - The letter "C" to identify a team captain;
  - American flag;
  - State flag.
3. Any item in paragraph 2 must not exceed 16 square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram), including any additional material (e.g., patch).
4. A border around the collar and cuffs not more than 1 inch wide is permissible, as is a maximum 4-inch stripe along the side seam (insert from the underarm to pants top).
5. Jerseys may not be taped or tied in any manner.

*Note: The uniform diagram in Appendix E may assist in the understanding of these rules.*



b. *Color.*

1. Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colors. Players on the same team shall wear jerseys of the same color and design.
2. The visiting team shall wear white jerseys; however, the home team may wear white jerseys if the teams have agreed in writing before the season.
3. If the home team wears colored jerseys, the visiting team may also wear colored jerseys, if and only if the following conditions have been satisfied
  - a. The home team has agreed in writing prior to the game; and
  - b. The conference of the home team certifies that the jersey of the visiting team is of a contrasting color.
4. If on the kickoff at the start of each half, the visiting team wears a colored jersey in violation of the conditions specified in paragraph 3, it is a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct.

**PENALTY—Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards at the succeeding spot following the kickoff. If the kickoff is returned for a touchdown, the penalty is assessed either on the try or on the succeeding kickoff, at the option of the home team. [S27] In addition, Officials shall charge a team timeout at the start of each quarter the illegal jerseys are worn, or a foul for delay of the game if all timeouts have been used.**

5. If a colored jersey contains white, it may appear only as any of the items listed in paragraph a-2 above.

c. *Numerals.*

1. The jersey must have clearly visible, permanent Arabic numerals measuring at least 8 and 10 inches in height front and back, respectively. The number must be of a color that itself is clearly in distinct contrast with the color of the jersey, irrespective of any border around the number.
2. Teams wearing jerseys/numerals that do not conform to this rule will be asked to change into legal jerseys before the game and before the start of the second half. On the kickoff at the start of each half, if a team wears a jersey in violation of the conditions specified in paragraph 1, it is a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct.

**PENALTY—Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards at the succeeding spot following the kickoff. If the kickoff is returned for a touchdown, the penalty is assessed either on the try or on the succeeding kickoff, at the option of the home team. [S27] In addition, Officials shall charge a team timeout at the start of each quarter the illegal jerseys are worn, or a foul for delay of the game if all timeouts have been used. (A. R. 1-4-5-I)**

3. All players of a team shall have the same color and style numbers front and back. The individual bars must be approximately 1-1/2 inches wide. Numbers on any part of the uniform shall correspond with the mandatory front and back jersey numbers.

## Optional Equipment

ARTICLE 6. The following items are legal:

- a. *Towels and Hand Warmers.* 1. Solid white towels no smaller than 4" by 12" and no larger than 6" by 12" with no words, symbols, letters, or numbers. Towels may bear the team logo. They may also contain a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark not to exceed 2-1/4 square inches in area. Towels that are not solid white are not permitted.  
2. Hand warmers worn during inclement weather.
- b. *Gloves.*
  1. A glove is a fitted covering for a hand having separate sections for each finger and thumb, without any additional material that connects any of the fingers and/or thumb, and that completely covers each finger and thumb. There is no restriction on the color of gloves.
  2. Gloves must have a securely attached label or stamp ("NF/NCAA Specifications") indicating voluntary compliance with appropriate test specifications on file with either the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) or the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE), unless made of unaltered plain cloth.
- c. *Eye shields.* Eye shields must be clear, not tinted, and made from molded or rigid material. Eyeglasses and goggles also must be clear and not tinted. No medical exceptions are allowed.
- d. *Insignia.* 1. Persons or events may be memorialized by an insignia with an area not greater than 16 square inches on the uniform or helmet.  
2. Institutional decals are allowed on helmets.
- e. *Eye shade.* Any shading under a player's eyes must be solid black with no words, numbers, logos or other symbols.
- f. *Game information.* Any player may have written game information on the wrist, arm or belt.

## Illegal Equipment

ARTICLE 7. Illegal equipment includes the following (See Appendix E for additional details):

- a. Equipment worn by a player that could endanger other players.
- b. Tape or any bandage other than that used to protect an injury, subject to the approval of the umpire.
- c. Hard, abrasive or unyielding equipment that is not completely covered and padded, subject to the approval of the umpire.
- d. Cleats that extend more than 1/2 inch from the base of the shoe (See Appendix E for full specifications). (Rule 9-2-2-f)
- e. Any equipment that could confuse or deceive an opponent.
- f. Any equipment that could provide an unfair advantage to any player.
- g. Adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or a player's person, clothing or attachment [**Exception:** Eye shade. (Rule 1-4-6-e)].
- h. Uniform attachments other than towels (Rule 1-4-6-a).
- i. Rib pads, shoulder pad attachments and back protectors that are not totally covered. (A.R. 1-4-7-II)

- j. Visible bandannas worn on the field outside the team area (A.R. 1-4-7-I).
- k. Jerseys that do not conform with Rule 1-4-5.
- l. Non-standard overbuilt facemask. (A.R. 1-4-7-IV)

### **Mandatory and Illegal Equipment Enforcement**

ARTICLE 8. a. No player wearing illegal equipment or failing to wear mandatory equipment shall be permitted to play. (*Exception:* Rule 1-4-5-b and c)

- b. If an official discovers illegal equipment, or if a player is not wearing mandatory equipment, the player must leave the game for at least one down and is not allowed to return until the equipment is made legal. The player may be allowed to return without missing a down if the team takes a charged team timeout, but in any event the player may not play with illegal equipment or without mandatory equipment.
- c. If equipment becomes illegal through play, the player is not required to leave the game for one down, but the player may not participate until the equipment is made legal. (A.R. 1-4-7-II)

### **Coaches' Certification**

ARTICLE 9. The head coach or their designated representative shall certify in writing to the umpire before the game that all players:

- a. Have been informed what equipment is mandatory by rule and what constitutes illegal equipment.
- b. Have been provided the equipment mandated by rule.
- c. Have been instructed to wear and how to wear mandatory equipment during the game.
- d. Have been instructed to notify the coaching staff when equipment becomes illegal through play during the game.

### **Prohibited Signal Devices**

ARTICLE 10. Players may not be equipped with any electronic, mechanical or other signal devices for the purpose of communicating with any source (*Exceptions:* 1. A medically prescribed hearing aid of the sound-amplifier type for hearing-impaired players. 2. A device for transmission or reception of data specifically and only for purposes of health and safety.)

**PENALTY—Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards at the succeeding spot. Player is ejected [S7, S27 and S47].**

### **Prohibited Field Equipment**

ARTICLE 11. Jurisdiction regarding the presence and location of communication equipment (cameras, sound devices, etc.) within the playing enclosure resides with game management personnel.

- a. Television replay or monitor equipment is prohibited at the sidelines, press box or other locations within the playing enclosure for coaching purposes during the game. Motion pictures, any type of film, facsimile machines, videotapes, photographs, writing-transmission machines and computers may not be used by coaches or for coaching purposes any time during the game or between periods. Computers, tablets, etc. are not allowed in the coaching booth.

**[Exceptions:** 1) Monitors may be used only to view the live telecast or webcast. The home team is responsible for assuring identical television capability in the coaches' booths of both teams. This capability may not include replay equipment or recorders. 2) A monitor is permitted on the sideline only to assist team medical staffs in the diagnosis and treatment of student-athletes.]

- b. Only voice communication between the press box and team area is permitted. Coaches' booth space and location must be approximately equivalent for the home and visiting teams and should be located in the traditional press box area. Where press-box space is not adequate, only voice communication may originate from any area in the stands between the 20-yard lines extended to the top of the stadium. No other communication for coaching purposes is permitted anywhere else, including communication from outside the stadium (remote coaching).
- c. Media communication equipment, including cameras, sound devices, computers and microphones, is prohibited on or above the field, or in or above the team area (Rule 2-31-1).

**Exceptions:**

- 1. Camera equipment attached to a goal support behind the uprights and crossbar.
- 2. Camera(s) embedded in any pylon.
- 3. A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to the cap of any official with prior approval of the conference and the participating institutions.
- 4. A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to cables that extend over the team area and field of play, including the end zones.
- 5. An institutional videographer may be in the team area as one of that institution's 50 credentialed individuals. This video may not be used during any live broadcast or digital stream of the game.
- d. Microphones attached to coaches during the game for media transmission are prohibited. (**Exception:** A microphone may be attached to the head coach for institutional use only after the conclusion of the live broadcast.)
- e. Team personnel may not be interviewed from the start of the first period until the referee declares the game ended (**Exception:** Only coaches may be interviewed between the conclusion of the second period and the beginning of the third period).
- f. No one in the team area or coaching box may use any artificial sound amplification to communicate with players on the field.
- g. Any attempt to record, either through audio or video means, any signals given by an opposing player, coach or other team personnel is prohibited.

**Coaches' Phones, Headsets and Communication Devices**

ARTICLE 12. Coaches' phones, headsets and communication devices are not subject to playing rules penalties before or during the game.

- a. A conference may develop a policy to provide guidance in handling situations dealing with failure of coaches' headsets.
- b. For Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) football, within game management responsibility, each team may use a maximum of 23 headsets with guidelines as follows:

1. Fifteen (15) of the headsets may be used by countable coaches and graduate assistants for coaching purposes.
  2. Three (3) “listen only” headsets may be used in the Coaches Booth by individuals who are full time undergraduate students or are within 10 years of exhaustion of eligibility or, if earlier, college graduation. Only countable coaches, graduate assistants and the three individuals using the “listen only” devices may be in the coaches’ booth. (**Exception:** One communication technician.)
  3. Four (4) of the headsets may only be used by Squad Members or up to four designated full-time undergraduate students.
  4. The one remaining headset may be used on the field for non-coaching activity.
  5. Headsets that are used for medical, game operations, security, etc. staffs are exempt from these limitations, provided the communication is separate from coaching communication devices.
  6. One communication technician in the team area and one communication technician in the coaches’ booth may be on the coaching headsets to monitor and handle any technical issues with the headsets outside of the allowable 23 devices.
- c. For all other NCAA football programs, each team may use a maximum of 23 headsets with category limits managed at each conference’s direction.

### **Referee Communication**

ARTICLE 13. a. A microphone is mandatory for the referee to be used for all game announcements. It is strongly recommended that it be a lapel-type microphone. The microphone must be controlled by the referee. It may not be open at other times. Microphones on other officials are prohibited.

b. A protected wireless official-to-official communication system (i.e., O2O) open only to the officiating crew, instant replay and conference officiating observer is permitted.

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# RULE 2

## Definitions

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### SECTION 1. Approved Rulings and Official's Signals

ARTICLE 1. a. An approved ruling (A.R.) is an official decision on a given statement of facts. It serves to illustrate the spirit and application of the rules. The relationship between the rules and an approved ruling is analogous to that between statutory law and a decision of the Supreme Court.

b. An official's signal [S] refers to the Official Football Signals 1 through 47.

### SECTION 2. The Ball: Live, Dead, Loose, Ready For Play

#### Live Ball

ARTICLE 1. A live ball is a ball in play. A pass, kick or fumble that has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight.

#### Dead Ball

ARTICLE 2. A dead ball is a ball not in play.

#### Loose Ball

ARTICLE 3. a. A loose ball is a live ball not in player possession during:

1. A running play.
2. A scrimmage or free kick before possession is gained or regained or the ball is dead by rule.
3. The interval after a legal forward pass is touched and before it becomes complete, incomplete or intercepted. This interval is during a forward pass play, and any player eligible to touch the ball may bat it in any direction.

b. All players are eligible to touch, catch or recover a fumble (*Exceptions:* Rules 7-2-2-a-Exc.2 and 8-3-2-d-5) or a backward pass.

c. Eligibility to touch a kick is governed by kick rules (Rule 6).

d. Eligibility to touch a forward pass is governed by pass rules (Rule 7).

#### When Ball Is Ready for Play

ARTICLE 4. A dead ball is ready for play when:

- a. With the 40-second play clock running, an official places the ball at a hash mark or between the inbounds marks and steps away to their position.
- b. With the play clock set at 25 seconds, or at 40 seconds after an injury to or loss of helmet by a defensive team player, the referee sounds their whistle and either signals to start the game clock [S2] or signals that the ball is ready for play [S1]. (A.R. 4-1-4-I and II)

## SECTION 3. Blocking

### Blocking

ARTICLE 1. a. Blocking is obstructing an opponent by intentionally contacting the opponent with any part of the blocker's body.

b. Pushing is blocking an opponent with open hands.

### Below Waist

ARTICLE 2. a. A block below the waist is a block in which the force of the initial contact is below the waist of an opponent who has one or both feet on the ground. When in question, the contact is below the waist (Rule 9-1-6).

b. A blocker who makes contact above the waist and then slides below the waist has not blocked below the waist. If the blocker first contacts the opposing player's hands at the waist or above, it is a legal "above the waist" block (Rule 9-1-6).

### Chop Block

ARTICLE 3. A chop block is a high-low or low-high combination block by any two players against an opponent (not the ball carrier) anywhere on the field, with or without a delay between blocks; the "low" component is at the opponent's thigh or below. (A.R. 9-1-10-I-IV). It is not a foul if the blockers' opponent initiates the contact. (A.R. 9-1-10-V)

### Block in the Back

ARTICLE 4. a. A block in the back is contact against an opponent occurring when the force of the initial contact is from behind and above the waist. When in question, the contact is at or below the waist (see Clipping, Rule 2-5) (Rule 9-3-5) (A.R. 9-3-3-I-VII and A.R. 10-2-2-XII).

b. The position of the blocker's head or feet does not necessarily indicate the point of initial contact.

### Frame of the Body

ARTICLE 5. The frame of a player's body is at the shoulders or below other than the back [Rule 9-3-3-a-1-(b) Exception].

### Blocking Zone

ARTICLE 6. a. The blocking zone is a rectangle centered on the middle lineman of the offensive formation and extending five yards laterally and three yards longitudinally in each direction.

b. The blocking zone disintegrates when the ball leaves the zone.

### Blind-Side Block

ARTICLE 7. A blind-side block is an open field block against an opponent that is initiated from outside the opponent's field of vision, or otherwise in such a manner that the opponent cannot reasonably defend themselves against the block.

## SECTION 4. Catch, Recovery, Possession

### Possession

ARTICLE 1. Possession refers to custody of (a) a live ball as described later in this article and (b) a dead ball to be snapped or free-kicked. It may refer either to player possession or team possession.

a. Player Possession.

The ball is in player possession when a player has the ball firmly in their grasp by holding or controlling it with hand(s) or arm(s) while contacting the ground inbounds.

b. Team Possession.

The ball is in team possession:

1. When one of its players has player possession, including when they are attempting a punt, drop kick or place kick; or
2. While a forward pass thrown by a player of that team is in flight; or
3. During a loose ball if a player of that team last had player possession; or
4. When the team is next to snap or free kick the ball.

c. A team is in legal possession if it has team possession when its players are eligible to catch or recover the ball.

### Belongs To

ARTICLE 2. "Belongs to," as contrasted with "in possession," denotes custody of a dead ball. Such custody may be temporary, because the ball must next be put in play in accordance with rules governing the existing situation.

### Catch, Interception, Recovery

ARTICLE 3. a. To catch a ball means that a player:

1. Secures firm control with the hand(s) or arm(s) of a live ball in flight before the ball touches the ground, and
2. Touches the ground in bounds with any part of the body, and then
3. Maintains control of the ball long enough to enable that player to perform an act common to the game, i.e., long enough to pitch or hand the ball, advance it, avoid or ward off an opponent, etc., and
4. Satisfies paragraphs b, c, and d below.

b. If a player goes to the ground in the act of catching a pass (with or without contact by an opponent) the player must maintain complete and continuous control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground, whether in the field of play or in the end zone. This is also required for a player attempting to make a catch at the sideline and going to the ground out of bounds. If the player loses control of the ball which then touches the ground before they regain control, it is not a catch. If the player regains control inbounds prior to the ball touching the ground it is a catch.

c. If the player loses control of the ball while simultaneously touching the ground with any part of their body, or if there is doubt that the acts were simultaneous, it is not a catch. If a player has control of the ball, a slight movement of the ball, even if it touches the ground, will not be considered



loss of possession; the player must lose control of the ball in order for there to be a loss of possession.

- d. If the ball touches the ground after the player secures control and continues to maintain control, and the elements above are satisfied, it is a catch.
- e. An interception is a catch of an opponent's pass or fumble.
- f. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception (Rules 7-3-6 and 7).
- g. A player recovers a ball if they fulfill the criteria in paragraphs a, b, c, and d for catching a ball that is still alive after hitting the ground.
- h. When in question, the catch, recovery or interception is not completed.

### **Simultaneous Catch or Recovery**

ARTICLE 4. A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch or recovery in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players inbounds (A.R. 7-3-6-I-II).

## **SECTION 5. Clipping**

ARTICLE 1. a. Clipping is a block against an opponent in which the force of the initial contact is from behind and at or below the waist (Rule 9-1-5).

- b. The position of the blocker's head or feet does not necessarily indicate the point of initial contact.

## **SECTION 6. Deliberate Dead-Ball Advance**

Deliberately advancing a dead ball is an attempt by a player to advance the ball after any part of their body, other than a hand or foot, has touched the ground or after the ball has been declared dead by rule (*Exception:* Rule 4-1-3-b Exception).

## **SECTION 7. Down, Between Downs and Loss of Down**

### **Down**

ARTICLE 1. A down is a unit of the game that starts after the ball is ready for play with a legal snap (scrimmage down) or legal free kick (free kick down) and ends when the ball becomes dead [*Exception:* The try is a scrimmage down that begins when the referee declares the ball ready for play (Rule 8-3-2-b)].

### **Between Downs**

ARTICLE 2. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.

### **Loss of Down**

ARTICLE 3. "Loss of down" is an abbreviation meaning "loss of the right to repeat a down."

## **SECTION 8. Fair Catch**

### **Fair Catch**

ARTICLE 1. a. A fair catch of a scrimmage kick is a catch beyond the neutral zone by a Team B player who has made a valid signal during a scrimmage kick that is untouched beyond the neutral zone.

- b. A fair catch of a free kick is a catch by a Team B player who has made a valid signal during an untouched free kick.
- c. A valid or invalid fair catch signal deprives the receiving team of the opportunity to advance the ball. The ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch or recovery. If the catch precedes the signal, the ball is dead when the signal is first given.
- d. If the receiver shades their eyes from the sun without waving their hand(s), the ball is live and may be advanced.

### **Valid Signal**

ARTICLE 2. A valid signal is a signal given by a player of Team B who has obviously signaled their intention by extending one hand only clearly above their head and waving that hand from side to side of their body more than once.

### **Invalid Signal**

ARTICLE 3. An invalid signal is any waving signal by a player of Team B:

- a. That does not meet the requirements of Article 2 (above); or
- b. That is given after a scrimmage kick is caught beyond the neutral zone, strikes the ground or touches another player beyond the neutral zone (A.R. 6-5-3-III-V); or
- c. That is given after a free kick is caught, strikes the ground or touches another player. [*Exception:* Rule 6-4-1-f]

## **SECTION 9. Forward, Beyond and Forward Progress**

### **Forward, Beyond**

ARTICLE 1. Forward, beyond or in advance of, as related to either team, denotes direction toward the opponent's end line. Converse terms are backward or behind.

### **Forward Progress**

ARTICLE 2. Forward progress is a term indicating the end of advancement by the ball carrier or airborne pass receiver of either team and applies to the position of the ball when it becomes dead by rule (Rules 4-1-3-a, b and p; Rules 4-2-1 and 4; and Rule 5-1-3-a Exception) (A.R. 5-1-3-I-VI and A.R. 8-2-1-I-IX) (*Exception:* Rule 8-5-1-a, A.R. 8-5-1-I).

## **SECTION 10. Foul and Violation**

### **Foul**

ARTICLE 1. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.

### **Personal Foul**

ARTICLE 2. A personal foul is a foul involving illegal physical contact that endangers the safety of another player.

### **Flagrant Personal Foul**

ARTICLE 3. A flagrant personal foul is illegal physical contact so extreme or deliberate that it places an opponent in danger of catastrophic injury.

**Violation**

ARTICLE 4. A violation is a rule infraction for which no penalty is prescribed. Since it is not a foul, it does not offset a foul.

**SECTION 11. Fumble, Muff; Batting and Touching the Ball; Blocking a Kick****Fumble**

ARTICLE 1. To fumble the ball is to lose player possession by any act other than passing, kicking or successful handing (A.R. 2-19-2-I and A.R. 4-1-3-I). The status of the ball is a fumble.

**Muff**

ARTICLE 2. To muff the ball is to touch the ball in an unsuccessful attempt to catch or recover it. Muffing the ball does not change its status.

**Batting**

ARTICLE 3. Batting the ball is intentionally striking it or intentionally changing its direction with the hand(s) or arm(s). When in question, the ball is accidentally touched rather than batted. Batting the ball does not change its status.

**Touching**

ARTICLE 4. a. Touching a ball not in player possession denotes any contact with the ball. It may be intentional or unintentional, and it always precedes possession and control.

- b. Intentional touching is deliberate or intended touching.
- c. Forced touching results when a player's contact with the ball is due to (i) an opponent blocking that player into it, or (ii) the ball being batted or illegally kicked into that player by an opponent. If the touching is forced, the player in question by rule has not touched the ball (Rules 6-1-4 and 6-3-4)
- d. When in question, a ball has not been touched on a kick or forward pass.

**Blocking a Scrimmage Kick**

ARTICLE 5. Blocking a scrimmage kick is touching the kicked ball by an opponent of the kicking team in an attempt to prevent the ball from crossing the neutral zone (Rule 6-3-1-b).

**SECTION 12. Lines****Sidelines**

ARTICLE 1. A sideline runs from end line to end line on each side of the field and separates the field of play from the area that is out of bounds. The entire sideline is out of bounds.

**Goal Lines and Pylons**

ARTICLE 2. The goal line at each end of the field of play runs between the sidelines and is part of the vertical plane that separates the end zone from the field of play. The two goal lines are 100 yards apart. The plane of the goal line

extends between and includes the pylons, which are out of bounds. The entire goal line is in the end zone. A team's goal line is that which it is defending.

### **End Lines**

ARTICLE 3. An end line runs between the sidelines 10 yards behind each goal line and separates the end zone from the area that is out of bounds. The entire end line is out of bounds.

### **Boundary Lines**

ARTICLE 4. The boundary lines are the sidelines and the end lines. The area enclosed by the boundary lines is "in bounds," and the area surrounding and including the boundary lines is "out of bounds."

### **Restraining Lines**

ARTICLE 5. A restraining line is part of a vertical plane that limits a team's alignment for free kicks. The plane extends beyond the sidelines (A.R. 2-12-5-I).

### **Yard Lines**

ARTICLE 6. A yard line is any line in the field of play parallel to the end lines. A team's own yard lines, marked or unmarked, are numbered consecutively from its own goal line to the 50-yard line.

### **Hash Marks**

ARTICLE 7. The two hash marks are 60 feet from the sidelines. Hash marks and short yard-line extensions shall measure 24 inches in length.

### **Nine-Yard Marks**

ARTICLE 8. Nine-yard marks 12 inches in length, every 10 yards, shall be located nine yards from the sidelines. They are not required if the field is numbered according to Rule 1-2-1-i.

## **SECTION 13. Handing the Ball**

ARTICLE 1. a. Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing, fumbling or kicking it.

- b. Except when permitted by rule, handing the ball forward to a teammate is illegal.
- c. Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of attempted handing is a fumble by the last player in possession [*Exception:* The snap (Rule 2-23-1-c)].
- d. A backward handoff occurs when the ball carrier releases the ball before it is beyond the yard line where the ball carrier is positioned.

## **SECTION 14. Huddle**

A huddle is two or more players grouped together after the ball is ready for play and before a snap or a free kick.

## SECTION 15. Hurdling

ARTICLE 1. a. Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent while that opponent is still on their feet (Rule 9-1-13).

- b. "On their feet" means that no part of the opponent's body other than one or both feet is in contact with the ground.

## SECTION 16. Kicks; Kicking the Ball

### Kicking the Ball; Legal and Illegal Kicks

ARTICLE 1. a. Kicking the ball is intentionally striking the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot.

- b. A legal kick is a punt, drop kick or place kick made according to the rules by a player of Team A before a change of team possession. Kicking the ball in any other manner is illegal (A.R. 6-1-2-1).
- c. Any free kick or scrimmage kick continues to be a kick until it is caught or recovered by a player or becomes dead.
- d. When in question, a ball is accidentally touched rather than kicked.

### Punt

ARTICLE 2. A punt is a kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it before it touches the ground.

### Drop Kick

ARTICLE 3. A drop kick is a kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it as it touches the ground.

### Place Kick

ARTICLE 4. a. A field goal place kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession while the ball is controlled on the ground by a teammate. (Rule 2-16-9)

- b. A tee is a device that elevates the ball for kicking purposes. It may not elevate the ball's lowest point more than one inch above the ground (A.R. 2-16-4-1). If utilized, a tee must be in contact with the ball for the kick to be legal.
- c. A free kick place kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession while the ball is positioned on a tee or the ground. It may be controlled by a teammate. The ball may be positioned on the ground and contacting the tee.
- d. No device or material may be used to mark the spot of a scrimmage place kick or to elevate the ball. This is a live-ball foul at the snap. (Rule 6-3-10-d)

### Free Kick

ARTICLE 5. a. A free kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession made under restrictions specified in Rules 4-1-4, 6-1-1 and 6-1-2.

- b. A free kick after a safety may be a punt, drop kick or place kick.

**Kickoff**

ARTICLE 6. A kickoff is a free kick that starts each half and follows each try or successful field goal attempt (**Exception:** In extra periods). It must be a place kick or a drop kick.

**Scrimmage Kick**

ARTICLE 7. a. A scrimmage kick is a punt, drop kick, or field goal place kick. It is a legal kick if it is made by Team A in or behind the neutral zone during a scrimmage down before team possession changes.

- b. A scrimmage kick has crossed the neutral zone when it touches the ground, a player, an official or anything beyond the neutral zone (**Exception:** Rule 6-3-1-b) (A.R. 6-3-1-I-IV).
- c. A scrimmage kick made when the kicker's entire body is beyond the neutral zone is an illegal kick and a live-ball foul that causes the ball to become dead (Rule 6-3-10-c).

**Return Kick**

ARTICLE 8. A return kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession after change of team possession during a down. It is an illegal kick and a live-ball foul that causes the ball to become dead (Rule 6-3-10-b).

**Field Goal Attempt**

ARTICLE 9. A field goal attempt is a scrimmage kick. It may be a place kick or drop kick.

**Scrimmage Kick Formation**

ARTICLE 10. a. A scrimmage kick formation is a formation with no player in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs, and with either (1) at least one player 10 or more yards behind the neutral zone; or (2) a potential holder and potential kicker seven or more yards behind the neutral zone in position for a place kick. For either (1) or (2) to qualify as a scrimmage kick formation, it must be obvious that a kick will be attempted (A.R. 9-1-14-I-III)

- b. If Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap, any action by Team A during the down is deemed to be from a scrimmage kick formation.

**SECTION 17. The Neutral Zone**

ARTICLE 1. a. The neutral zone is the space between the two scrimmage lines extended to the sidelines. (Rule 2-21-2) Its width is equal to the length of the ball.

- b. The neutral zone is established when the ball is ready for play and is resting on the ground with its long axis at right angles to the scrimmage line and parallel to the sidelines.
- c. The neutral zone exists until there is a change of team possession, until a scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone or until the ball is declared dead.

## SECTION 18. Encroachment and Offside

### Encroachment

ARTICLE 1. After the ball is ready for play, encroachment occurs when an offensive player is in or beyond the neutral zone after the snapper touches or simulates (hand[s] at or below their knees) touching the ball before the snap. (**Exception:** When the ball is put in play, the snapper is not encroaching when in the neutral zone.)

### Offside

ARTICLE 2. After the ball is ready for play, offside occurs (Rule 7-1-5) when a defensive player:

- a. Is in or beyond the neutral zone when the ball is legally snapped; or
- b. Contacts an opponent beyond the neutral zone before the ball is snapped; or
- c. Contacts the ball before it is snapped; or
- d. Threatens an offensive lineman, causing an immediate reaction, before the ball is snapped (Rule 7-1-2-b-3-Exception, A.R. 7-1-3-V Note); or
- e. Crosses the neutral zone and charges toward a Team A back (A.R. 7-1-5-III); or
- f. Is not behind their restraining line when the ball is legally free-kicked (Rule 6-1-2).

Offside occurs when one or more players of the kicking team are not behind their restraining line when the ball is legally free-kicked. (**Exception:** The kicker and holder are not offside when they are beyond their restraining line.)

## SECTION 19. Passes

### Passing

ARTICLE 1. Passing the ball is throwing it. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or intercepted by a player or the ball becomes dead.

### Forward and Backward Pass

ARTICLE 2. a. A pass is forward if the ball first strikes the ground, a player, an official or anything else beyond the spot where the ball is released. All other passes are backward passes. When in question a pass thrown in or behind the neutral zone is forward rather than a backward pass. (**Exception:** Games using Instant Replay)

- b. When a Team A player is holding the ball to pass it forward toward the neutral zone, any intentional forward movement of the passer's hand with the ball firmly in their control starts the forward pass unless the player clearly starts to bring the ball back with firm control to the passer's body. If a Team B player contacts the passer or ball after forward movement begins and the ball leaves the passer's hand, a forward pass is ruled regardless of where the ball strikes the ground or a player (A.R. 2-19-2-1).
- c. When in question, the ball is passed and not fumbled during an attempted forward pass. (**Exception:** Games using Instant Replay)

- d. A snap becomes a backward pass when the snapper releases the ball, other than via a hand-to-hand exchange (A.R. 2-23-1-I).

### **Crosses Neutral Zone**

ARTICLE 3. a. A legal forward pass has crossed the neutral zone when it first strikes the ground, a player, an official or anything beyond the neutral zone inbounds. It has not crossed the neutral zone when it first strikes the ground, a player, an official or anything in or behind the neutral zone inbounds.

- b. A player has crossed the neutral zone if that player's entire body has been beyond the neutral zone.  
c. A legal forward pass is beyond or behind the neutral zone where it crosses the sideline.

### **Catchable Forward Pass**

ARTICLE 4. A catchable forward pass is an untouched legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone to an eligible player who has a reasonable opportunity to catch the ball. When in question, a legal forward pass is catchable.

## **SECTION 20. Penalty**

A penalty is a result imposed by rule against a team that has committed a foul and may include one or more of the following: loss of yardage, loss of down, automatic first down, disqualification, ejection, subtraction from the game clock (Rule 10-1-1-b).

## **SECTION 21. Scrimmage**

### **Scrimmage Down**

ARTICLE 1. A scrimmage down is the action between the two teams during a down that begins with a legal snap. *Note:* A try down is a scrimmage down that begins when the referee declares the ball ready for play (Rule 8-3-2-b)

### **Scrimmage Line**

ARTICLE 2. The scrimmage line for each team is established when the ball is ready for play. It is the yard line that defines the vertical plane passing through the point of the ball nearest a team's own goal line.

## **SECTION 22. Shift**

ARTICLE 1. a. A shift is a simultaneous change of position or stance by two or more offensive players after the ball is ready for play before the snap for a scrimmage down (A.R. 7-1-3-I-II and A.R. 7-1-2-I-IV).

- b. The shift ends when all players have been motionless for one full second.  
c. The shift continues if one or more players are in motion before the end of the one second interval.

## **SECTION 23. Snapping the Ball**

ARTICLE 1. a. Legally snapping the ball (a snap) is handing or passing it backward from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand or hands, the ball actually leaving the hand or hands in this motion (Rule 4-1-4).



- b. The snap starts when the ball is moved legally and ends when the ball leaves the snapper's hands; the ball then becomes alive (Rule 4-1-1, A.R. 7-1-5-1-II).
- c. If, during any backward motion of a legal snap, the ball slips from the snapper's hand, it becomes a backward pass and is in play (Rule 4-1-1).
- d. While resting on the ground and before the snap, the long axis of the ball must be at right angles to the scrimmage line (Rule 7-1-3).
- e. Unless moved in a backward direction, the movement of the ball does not start a legal snap. It is not a legal snap if the ball is first moved forward or lifted.
- f. If the ball is touched by Team B during a legal snap, the ball remains dead and Team B is penalized. If the ball is touched by Team B during an illegal snap, the ball remains dead and Team A is penalized (A.R. 7-1-5-1-II).
- g. The snap need not be between the snapper's legs; but to be legal, it must be a quick and continuous backward motion.
- h. The ball must be snapped on or between the hash marks.

## **SECTION 24. Series and Possession Series**

### **Series**

ARTICLE 1. A series comprises up to four consecutive downs that each begins with a snap (Rule 5-1-1).

### **Possession Series**

ARTICLE 2. A possession series is a team's continuous possession of the ball in an extra period (Rule 3-1-3). It may consist of one or more series.

## **SECTION 25. Spots**

### **Enforcement Spot**

ARTICLE 1. An enforcement spot is the point at which the penalty for a foul or the result of a violation is enforced.

### **Previous Spot**

ARTICLE 2. The previous spot is the point at which the ball was last put in play.

### **Succeeding Spot**

ARTICLE 3. The succeeding spot is the point at which the ball is next to be put in play.

### **Dead-Ball Spot**

ARTICLE 4. The dead-ball spot is the point at which the ball became dead.

### **Spot of the Foul**

ARTICLE 5. The spot of the foul is the point at which that foul occurs. If out of bounds between the goal lines, it shall be the intersection of the nearer hash mark and the yard line extended through the spot of the foul. If out of bounds between the goal line and the end line or behind the end line, the foul is in the end zone.

**Out-of-Bounds Spot**

ARTICLE 6. The out-of-bounds spot is the point at which the ball becomes dead by rule because of going or being declared out of bounds.

**Inbounds Spot**

ARTICLE 7. The inbounds spot is the intersection of the nearer hash mark line and the yard line passing through either the dead-ball spot or the spot where a penalty leaves the ball in a side zone.

**Spot Where Run Ends**

ARTICLE 8. The spot where the run ends is the point:

- a. Where the ball is declared dead in player possession.
- b. Where player possession is lost on a fumble.
- c. Where handing of the ball occurs.
- d. Where an illegal forward pass is thrown.
- e. Where a backward pass is thrown.
- f. Where an illegal scrimmage kick is made beyond the line of scrimmage.
- g. Where a return kick occurs.
- h. Where player possession is gained under provisions of the “momentum rule” (Rule 8-5-1-a Exceptions).

**Spot Where Kick Ends**

ARTICLE 9. A scrimmage kick that crosses the neutral zone ends at the spot where it is caught or recovered or where the ball is declared dead by rule (Rule 2-16-1-c).

**Basic Spot**

ARTICLE 10. The basic spot is a benchmark for locating the enforcement spot for penalties governed by the Three-and-One Principle (Rule 2-33). Basic spots for the various categories of plays are given in Rule 10-2-2-d.

**Postscrimmage Kick Spot**

ARTICLE 11. The postscrimmage kick spot serves as the basic spot when postscrimmage kick enforcement applies (Rule 10-2-3).

- a. When the kick ends in the field of play, other than in the special cases given below, the postscrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends.
- b. When the kick ends in Team B's end zone, the postscrimmage kick spot is Team B's 20-yard line.

**Special cases:**

1. On an unsuccessful field goal attempt, if the ball is untouched by Team B after crossing the neutral zone and is declared dead beyond the neutral zone, the postscrimmage kick spot is:
  - (a) The previous spot, if the previous spot is on or outside Team B's 20-yard line; (A.R. 10-2-3-V)
  - (b) Team B's 20-yard line, if the previous spot is between Team B's 20-yard line and its goal line.
2. When Rule 6-3-11 is in effect, the postscrimmage kick spot is Team B's 20-yard line.

3. When Rule 6-5-1-b is in effect, the postscrimmage kick spot is the spot where the receiver first touched the kick.

## **SECTION 26. Tackling**

Tackling is grasping or encircling an opponent with a hand(s) or arm(s).

## **SECTION 27. Team and Player Designations**

### **Teams A and B**

ARTICLE 1. Team A is the team that is designated to put the ball in play, and Team B is the opponent. The teams retain these designations until the ball is next ready for play.

### **Offensive and Defensive Teams**

ARTICLE 2. The offensive team is the team in possession or the team to which the ball belongs; the defensive team is the opposing team.

### **Kicker and Holder**

ARTICLE 3. a. The kicker is any player who punts, drop kicks or place kicks according to rule. That player remains the kicker until they have had a reasonable time to regain their balance.

- b. A holder is a player who controls the ball on the ground or on a kicking tee. During a scrimmage-kick play, that player remains the holder until no player is in position to make the kick or, if the ball is kicked, until the kicker has had a reasonable time to regain their balance.

### **Lineman and Back**

ARTICLE 4. a. Lineman.

1. A lineman is any Team A player legally on their scrimmage line (Rule 2-21-2).
2. A Team A player is legally on the scrimmage line when facing their opponent's goal line with the line of their shoulders approximately parallel thereto and either (a) they are the snapper (Rule 2-27-8) or (b) their head breaks the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the snapper.
- b. Interior Lineman. An interior lineman is a lineman who is not on the end of their scrimmage line.
- c. Restricted Lineman. A restricted lineman is any interior lineman, or any lineman wearing a number 50-79, whose hand(s) are below the knees.
- d. Back.
  1. A back is any Team A player who is not a lineman and whose head or shoulder does not break the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the nearest Team A lineman.
  2. A back is also the player in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap.
  3. A lineman becomes a back before the snap when they move to a position as a back and stops.

**Passer**

ARTICLE 5. The passer is the player who throws a forward pass. That player is a passer from the time the ball is released until the pass is complete, incomplete or intercepted, or until they move to participate in the play.

**Player**

ARTICLE 6. a. A player is any one of the participants in the game who is not a substitute or a replaced player and is subject to the rules when inbounds or out of bounds.

- b. An airborne player is a player not in contact with the ground because they have leapt, jumped, dove, launched, etc., in other than normal running action.
- c. A departing player is a player leaving the field, having been replaced by a substitute.

**Runner and Ball Carrier**

ARTICLE 7. a. The runner is a player in possession of a live ball or simulating possession of a live ball.

- b. A ball carrier is a runner in possession of a live ball.

**Snapper**

ARTICLE 8. The snapper is the player who snaps the ball. That player is established as the snapper when they take a position behind the ball and touches or simulates (hand[s] at or below their knees) touching the ball (Rule 7-1-3).

**Substitute**

ARTICLE 9. a. A legal substitute is a replacement for a player or a player vacancy during the interval between downs.

- b. A legal incoming substitute becomes a player when they enter the field of play or end zones and communicates with a teammate or an official, enters the huddle, is positioned in an offensive or a defensive formation, or participates in a play.

**Replaced Player**

ARTICLE 10. A replaced player is one who participated during the previous down, has been replaced by a substitute and has left the field of play and the end zones.

**Player Vacancy**

ARTICLE 11. A player vacancy occurs when a team has fewer than 11 players in the game.

**Disqualified Player and Ejected Player**

ARTICLE 12. a. *Disqualified Player:*

1. A disqualified player is one who is declared ineligible for further participation in the game and is allowed to remain in the team area.
2. A player serving a first-half suspension due to a disqualification in the team's previous game may participate in pre-game warm-up activities.

During the first half they may remain in the team area but may not participate in the first half of the game.

b. *Ejected Player:*

1. An ejected player is one who is declared ineligible for further participation in the game and is not allowed to remain in the team area. This player must leave the playing enclosure under the escort of team personnel before the next play after their ejection. They must remain out of view of the field of play under team supervision for the duration of the game.
2. A player serving a first-half suspension due to an ejection in the team's previous game may participate in pre-game warm-up activities. During the first half they must remain out of view of the field of play under team supervision.

### **Squad Member**

ARTICLE 13. A squad member is part of a group of potential players, in uniform, organized for participation in the ensuing football game or football plays.

### **Defenseless Player**

ARTICLE 14. A defenseless player is one who because of their physical position and focus of concentration is especially vulnerable to injury. When in question, a player is defenseless. *Examples of defenseless players include but are not limited to:*

- a. A player in the act of or just after throwing a pass. This includes an offensive player in a passing posture with focus downfield.
- b. A receiver attempting to catch a forward pass or in position to receive a backward pass, or one who has completed a catch and has not had time to protect themselves or has not clearly become a ball carrier.
- c. A kicker in the act of or just after kicking a ball, or during the kick or the return.
- d. A kick returner attempting to catch or recover a kick, or one who has completed a catch or recovery and has not had time to protect themselves or has not clearly become a ball carrier..
- e. A player on the ground.
- f. A player obviously out of the play.
- g. A player who receives a blind-side block.
- h. A ball carrier already in the grasp of an opponent and whose forward progress has been stopped.
- i. A quarterback any time after a change of possession.
- j. A ball carrier who has obviously given themselves up and is sliding feet-first.

### **Player In Bounds and Out Of Bounds**

ARTICLE 15. a. Out of Bounds

1. A player is out of bounds when any part of their body touches anything other than another player or a game official on or outside a boundary line.

2. An out-of-bounds player who becomes airborne remains out of bounds until they touch the ground in bounds without simultaneously being out of bounds.

b. *In Bounds*

1. An inbounds player is a player who is not out of bounds.
2. An inbounds player who becomes airborne remains in bounds until they are out of bounds.

## **SECTION 28. Tripping**

Tripping is intentionally using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knees (Rule 9-1-2-c).

## **SECTION 29. Timing Devices**

### **Game Clock**

ARTICLE 1. The game clock is any device under the direction of the appropriate official used to time the 60 minutes of the game.

### **Play Clock**

ARTICLE 2. Each stadium shall have a visual play clock at each end of the playing enclosure. The play clock must be capable of counting down from both 40 seconds and 25 seconds. It should automatically default to 40 seconds and start immediately upon being reset by the play-clock operator when any official signals that the ball is dead after a play.

## **SECTION 30. Play Classification**

### **Forward Pass Play**

ARTICLE 1. A legal forward pass play is the interval between the snap and when a legal forward pass is complete, incomplete or intercepted.

### **Free Kick Play**

ARTICLE 2. A free kick play is the action during the interval from the time the ball is legally kicked until it comes into player possession or is declared dead by rule.

### **Scrimmage Kick Play**

ARTICLE 3. A scrimmage kick play is the action during the interval between the snap and when a scrimmage kick comes into player possession or the ball is declared dead by rule.

### **Running Play and Run**

ARTICLE 4. a. A running play is any live-ball action other than that during a free kick play, a scrimmage kick play or a legal forward pass play.

- b. A run is that segment of a running play during which a ball carrier has possession.
- c. If a ball carrier loses possession by a fumble, backward pass or illegal forward pass, the spot where the run ends (Rule 2-25-8) is the yard line where the ball carrier loses possession. The running play includes the run

and the loose-ball action before a player gains or regains possession or the ball is declared dead (A.R. 2-30-4-I and II).

- d. A new running play begins when a player gains or regains possession.

## SECTION 31. Field Areas

### The Field

ARTICLE 1. The field is the area within the limit lines and includes the limit lines and team areas, and the space above it (*Exception:* Enclosures over the field).

### Field of Play

ARTICLE 2. The field of play is the area enclosed by the sidelines and the goal lines.

### End Zone

- ARTICLE 3. a. The end zone at each end of the field is the rectangle defined by the goal line, sidelines and end line.
- b. The goal line and goal line pylons are in the end zone.
  - c. A team's end zone is the one it is defending (A.R. 8-5-1-VII and A.R. 8-6-1-I).

### Playing Surface

ARTICLE 4. The playing surface is the material or substance within the field of play, including the end zones.

### Playing Enclosure

ARTICLE 5. The playing enclosure is that area bounded by the stadium, dome, stands, fences or other structures. (*Exception:* Scoreboards are not considered within the playing enclosure.)

### Side Zone

ARTICLE 6. The side zone is the area between the hash marks and the near sideline.

## SECTION 32. Fighting

ARTICLE 1. Fighting is any attempt by a player, coach or squad member in uniform to strike an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to:

- a. An attempt to strike an opponent with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.
- b. An unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes any opponent to retaliate by fighting (Rules 9-2-1 and 9-5-1-a-c).

## SECTION 33. Three-and-One Principle

The Three-and-One Principle of penalty enforcement applies when the penalty statement for a foul does not specify the enforcement spot. Application of this principle is described in Rule 10-2-2-c.

**SECTION 34. Tackle Box**

ARTICLE 1. a. The tackle box is the rectangular area enclosed by the neutral zone, the two lines parallel to the sidelines five yards from the snapper, and Team A's end line. (See Appendix D.)

b. The tackle box disintegrates when the ball leaves it.



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# RULE 3

## Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

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### SECTION 1. Start of Each Period

#### Pregame, First and Third Periods

ARTICLE 1. a. Pregame Warmup. Prior to regular season games, teams must have access to the field for pregame warm-ups until at least 22 minutes before the opening kickoff. This may be altered in advance through written mutual agreement of the teams. Game management personnel are responsible for administering this rule.

- b. When any Squad Member enters the playing enclosure prior to the officials escorting the captains out for the coin toss, the head coach or an assistant coach from that team must be present on the field.
- c. When Squad Members are present within the playing enclosure subsequent to the officials' jurisdiction, they must be wearing their jerseys or have their numerals readily visible. Any player without their numeral readily visible must leave the playing enclosure.
- d. Each half shall start with a kickoff.
- e. Three minutes before the scheduled starting time, the referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of not more than four field captains from each team and another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. Before the second half, the referee will obtain the teams' second-half options.
- f. During the coin toss, each team shall remain in the area between the nine-yard marks and its sideline or in the team area. The coin toss begins when the field captains leave the nine-yard marks and ends when the captains return to the nine-yard marks.

#### **PENALTY [f]—Five yards from the succeeding spot [S19].**

- g. The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:
  1. To designate which team shall kick off.
  2. To designate which goal line their team shall defend.
  3. To defer their team's selection to the second half.
- h. The opponent shall then choose option 1 or 2 above, as available.
- i. If the winner of the toss chooses option 3 above, then after the opponent's choice the winner selects the available option (1 or 2 above).
- j. For the second half the loser of the toss, or the winner who chooses option 3 above, shall choose option 1 or 2 above. The opponent then chooses the remaining available option.

## Second and Fourth Periods

ARTICLE 2. Between the first and second periods and also between the third and fourth periods, the teams shall defend opposite goal lines.

- a. The ball shall be relocated at a spot corresponding exactly, in relation to goal lines and sidelines, to its location at the end of the preceding period.
- b. Possession of the ball, the number of the down and the distance to be gained shall remain unchanged.

## Extra Periods

ARTICLE 3. The NCAA tiebreaker system will be used when a game is tied after four periods. NCAA football-playing rules apply, with the following exceptions:

- a. Immediately after the conclusion of the fourth quarter, officials will instruct both teams to retire to their respective team areas. The officials will assemble at the 50-yard line and review the tiebreaker procedures.
- b. The officials will escort the captains (Rule 3-1-1) to the center of the field for the coin toss. The referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of not more than four field captains from each team and another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. The winner of the toss may not defer the choice and must choose one of the following options:
  1. Offense or defense, with the offense at the opponent's 25-yard line to start the first possession series.
  2. Which end of the field shall be used for both possession series of that overtime period.
- c. The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first extra period and shall have the first choice of the two options for subsequent even-numbered extra periods.
- d. *Definition.* An extra period shall consist of two possession series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap on or between the hash marks on the designated 25-yard line (unless relocated by penalty); this becomes the opponent's 25-yard line. The snap shall be from midway between the hash marks, unless the offensive team selects a different position on or between the hash marks before the ready-for-play signal. After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated only after a charged team timeout, unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls.
- e. *Possession series.* Each team retains the ball during a possession series until it scores or fails to make a first down. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead. However, Team A may not have a first down if it regains possession after a change of team possession (A.R. 3-1-3-I-IX). Beginning with the third extra period, a team's possession series will be one play for a two-point try from the three-yard line, unless relocated by penalty.

Team A and B designations are the same as defined in Rule 2-27-1.
- f. *Scoring.* The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winner. There shall be an equal number of possession series, as described in (e) above, in each extra period, unless Team B scores other than on the try. Beginning with the second extra period, teams scoring a touchdown must attempt a two-point

try. Although not illegal, a one-point try attempt by Team A will not result in a score (A.R. 3-1-3-X).

- g. *Fouls after a change of team possession* (A.R. 3-1-3-XI-XIII):
1. Penalties against either team are declined by rule in extra periods. (**Exceptions:** Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, dead-ball personal fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced on the succeeding play.)
  2. A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled. (**Exception:** Live-ball foul treated as a dead-ball foul.)
  3. If both teams foul during the down and Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls cancel and the down is not repeated. (**Exceptions:** Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, dead-ball personal fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced on the succeeding play.)
- h. *Timeouts.* Each team shall be allowed one timeout for each extra period. (Rule 3-3-7) Timeouts not used during the regulation periods may not be carried over into the extra period(s). Unused extra-period timeouts may not be carried over to other extra periods. Timeouts between periods shall be charged to the succeeding period.

Radio and television timeouts are permitted only between extra periods (first and second, second and third, etc.). Charged team timeouts may not be extended for radio and television purposes. The extra period(s) begins when the ball is first snapped.

In the absence of a media timeout, after the second and fourth extra period, there will be a two minute mandatory break period.

## **SECTION 2. Playing Time and Intermissions**

### **Length of Periods and Intermissions**

ARTICLE 1. The total playing time in a collegiate game shall be 60 minutes, divided into four periods of 15 minutes each, with one-minute intermissions between the first and second periods (first half) and between the third and fourth periods (second half) (**Exception:** A one-minute intermission between the first and second and the third and fourth periods may be extended for radio and television timeouts).

- a. No period shall end until the ball is dead and the referee declares the period ended [S14].
- b. The intermission between halves of a regular-season game shall be 20 minutes, unless shortened before the game by mutual agreement of the administrations of both schools. Immediately after the second period ends, the referee should begin the intermission by signaling to start the game clock [S2].

### **Timing Adjustments**

ARTICLE 2. Before the game starts, playing time and the intermission between halves may be shortened by the referee if they are of the opinion that darkness or other conditions may interfere with the game. The four periods must be of equal length if the game is shortened before its start.

- a. Any time during the game, the playing time of any remaining period or periods may be shortened by mutual agreement of the opposing head coaches and the referee. (A. R. 3-2-2-1)
- b. Timing errors on the game clock may be corrected but only in the period in which they occur.
- c. If the referee has positive knowledge of the elapsed time, they will reset and appropriately start the game clock.
- d. Timing errors on a play clock may be corrected by the referee. The play clock shall start again (Rule 2-29-2).
- e. When the play-clock count is interrupted by circumstances beyond the control of either team (without positive knowledge of game clock elapsed time), a new count shall be started and the game clock shall start per Rule 3-2-4-b.
- f. The 40/25-second clock is not started when the game clock is running with fewer than 40 or 25 seconds, respectively, in a period. The play clock shall be set appropriately and continuously display this time (40 or 25 seconds) and hold.
- g. The game clock should not be stopped if the play clock is started in conflict with paragraph f above.
- h. Timing adjustments for games using Instant Replay are governed by Rule 12-3-6 and 12-3-7.

### Extension of Periods

ARTICLE 3. a. A period shall be extended for an untimed down if one or more of the following occurs during a down in which time expires (A.R. 3-2-3-I-VIII):

1. A penalty is accepted for a live-ball foul(s) (**Exception:** Rule 10-2-5-a). At the option of the offended team, the period is *not* extended if the foul is by the team in possession and the statement of the penalty includes loss of down (A.R. 3-2-3-VIII).
  2. There are offsetting fouls.
  3. An official sounds their whistle inadvertently or otherwise incorrectly signals the ball dead.
- b. Additional untimed downs will be played until a down is free of the circumstances in statements 1, 2 and 3 of Rule 3-2-3-a (above).
- c. If a touchdown is scored during a down in which time in a period expires, the period is extended for the try (**Exception:** Rule 8-3-2-a).

### Timing Devices

ARTICLE 4. a. *Game Clock.* Playing time shall be kept with a game clock that may be either a stop watch operated by the line judge, back judge, field judge or side judge, or a game clock operated by an assistant under the direction of the appropriate judge. The type of game clock shall be determined by the game management. The game clock shall not display tenths of seconds.

- b. *40-Second Clock.* 1. When an official signals that the ball is dead, the play clock shall begin a 40-second count.
2. If the 40-second clock does not start or the count is interrupted for reasons beyond the control of the officials or the play-clock operator (e.g., clock malfunction), the referee shall stop the game clock and

- signal (both palms open in an over-the-head pumping motion) that the play clock should be reset at 40 seconds and started immediately.
3. In the event that the 40-second play clock is running and reads 25 before the ball is ready to be snapped, the referee shall declare a timeout and signal that the play clock be set at 25 seconds. When play is to be resumed, the referee will give the ready-for-play signal [S1] and the play clock shall begin the 25-second count. The game clock will start on the snap unless it had been running when the referee declared a timeout; in that case, it will start on the referee's signal (Rule 3-3-2-f). (A. R. 3-2-4-I and II)
  - c. *25-Second Clock.* If the officials signal the game clock to be stopped for any of the following reasons, the referee shall signal (one open palm in an over-the-head pumping motion) that the clock should be set at 25 seconds:
    1. Penalty administration.
    2. Charged team timeout.
    3. Media timeout.
    4. Injury timeout for a player of the offensive team only. The play clock is set to 40 seconds for an injury to a player of the defensive team.
    5. Measurement.
    6. Team B is awarded a first down other than a free kick.
    7. After a kick down other than a free kick.
    8. Score other than a touchdown (not the try).
    9. Start of each period.
    10. Start of a team's possession series in an extra period.
    11. Instant replay review.
    12. Other administrative stoppage.
    13. An offensive team player's helmet comes completely off through play. The play clock is set to 40 seconds if the helmet comes completely off a player of the defensive team.
 

When play is to be resumed, the referee will give the ready-for-play signal [S1] and the play clock will begin its count.
  - d. *Device Malfunction.* If a visual 40/25-second timing device becomes inoperative, both coaches shall be notified by the referee immediately and both clocks shall be turned off.

### **Minimum Time For A Play After Spiking The Ball**

ARTICLE 5. If the game clock is stopped and will start on the referee's signal with three or more seconds remaining in the quarter, the offense may reasonably expect to throw the ball directly to the ground (Rule 7-3-2-f) and have enough time for another play. With two seconds or one second on the game clock there is enough time for only one play. (A.R. 3-2-5-I)

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

### **Timeout**

ARTICLE 1. a. An official shall signal timeout when the rules provide for stopping the clock or when a timeout is charged to a team or to the referee. Other officials should repeat timeout signals. The referee may declare and

charge themselves with a discretionary timeout for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules (A.R. 3-3-1-IV).

- b. When a team's charged timeouts are exhausted and it requests a timeout, the officials shall not acknowledge the request. (Rule 3-3-4).
- c. Once the game begins, players shall not practice with a ball on the field of play or the end zones except during the half-time intermission.

### Starting and Stopping the Clock

ARTICLE 2. a. *Free Kick*. After the ball is free-kicked, the game clock shall be started on an official's signal when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, or when it crosses the goal line after being touched legally by Team B in its end zone. It is subsequently stopped on an official's signal when the ball is dead by rule. (A. R. 3-3-2-VII)

- b. *Scrimmage Down*. When a period begins with a scrimmage down, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally snapped. On all other scrimmage downs, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally snapped (Rule 3-3-2-d) or on a prior signal by the referee (Rule 3-3-2-e). The game clock shall not run during a try, during an extension of a period or during an extra period (A.R. 3-3-2-I-IV).
- c. *After a Score*. The game clock shall stop on an official's signal after a touchdown, field goal or safety. It shall be started again as in (a) above unless an accepted penalty erases the score or the down is repeated, in which cases it shall be started when the ball is legally snapped.
- d. *Starts on the Snap*. For each of the following, the game clock is stopped on an official's signal. If the next play begins with a snap, the game clock will start on the snap:
  1. Touchback.
  2. With fewer than two minutes remaining in a half a Team A ball carrier, fumble or backward pass is ruled out of bounds. (**Exception:** After a Team A forward fumble goes out of bounds, the clock starts on the referee's signal.)
  3. Team B is awarded a first down and will next snap the ball (A.R. 3-3-2-V).
  4. A forward pass is ruled incomplete.
  5. A team is granted a charged timeout.
  6. The ball becomes illegal.
  7. A period ends.
  8. A legal kick down ends. (A.R.3-3-2-VI)
  9. A return kick is made.
  10. A scrimmage kick is made beyond the neutral zone.
  11. Team A commits a delay-of-game foul while in a scrimmage-kick formation.
- e. *Starts on the Referee's Signal*. For each of the following reasons, the game clock is stopped on an official's signal. If the next play begins with a snap, the game clock will start on the referee's signal:
  1. Team A is awarded a first down, either through play or by penalty.
  2. A Team A forward fumble goes out of bounds.

3. Other than with fewer than two minutes remaining in a half, a Team A ball carrier, fumble or backward pass is ruled out of bounds.
  4. To complete a penalty (**Exception:** Rule 3-4-4-c).
  5. An injury timeout is allowed for one or more players or an official (A.R. 3-3-5-I-V).
  6. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.
  7. A possible first-down measurement.
  8. Both teams cause a delay in making the ball ready for play (A.R. 3-3-1-III).
  9. A live ball comes into possession of an official.
  10. A head coach requests a conference or challenges an instant-replay decision.
  11. The referee grants a media timeout.
  12. The referee declares a discretionary timeout.
  13. The referee declares a timeout for unfair noise (Rule 9-2-1-b-5 ).
  14. An illegal pass is thrown to conserve time (A.R. 7-3-2-II-VII) (**Exception:** Rule 3-4-4-c).
  15. The referee interrupts the 40/25-second count.
  16. A player's helmet comes completely off through play.
  17. When either team commits a dead-ball foul.
  18. Violation of a rule for mandatory equipment (Rule 1-4-4) or illegal equipment. (Rule 1-4-7)
- f. *Snap Supersedes Referee's Signal.* Whenever one or more incidents that cause the game clock to be started on the referee's signal (Rule 3-3-2-e) occur in conjunction with any that cause it to be started on the snap (Rules 3-3-2-c and 3-3-2-d), it shall be started on the snap. [**Exception:** Rule 3-4-4 (10-second runoff) supersedes this rule, other than when a team is granted a charged timeout. (A.R. 3-3-2-VIII and -IX)]

### Suspending the Game

ARTICLE 3. a. The referee may suspend the game temporarily when conditions warrant such action.

- b. When the game is stopped by actions of a person(s) not subject to the rules, or for any other reasons not specified in the rules, and cannot continue, the referee shall:
1. Suspend play and direct the players to their team areas.
  2. Refer the problem to those responsible for the game's management.
  3. Resume the game when conditions are satisfactory.
- c. If a game is suspended under Rules 3-3-3-a and b before the end of the fourth period and cannot be resumed, there are four possible options:
1. Resume the game at a later date;
  2. Terminate the game with a determined final score;
  3. Forfeit of the game; or
  4. Declare a no contest.

The option that takes effect shall be determined by conference policy if both institutions are members of the same conference. In non-conference competition, the directors of athletics at the participating

institutions or their designees, in consultation with the coaches, must agree on one of the four options. This agreement will include the final score if the game is terminated (Rule 8-1-2).

In the event that the directors of athletics do not reach an agreement, the conference policy of the home team shall be used to determine the outcome.

- d. If a game is suspended under Rules 3-3-3-a and b after four periods of play and cannot be resumed, the game shall be ruled a tie. The final score shall be the score at the end of the last completed period. (Note: If a winner must be determined in a conference playoff game, conference policy shall determine when and where the game will be resumed.)
- e. A suspended game, if resumed, will begin with the same time remaining and under the identical conditions of down, distance, field position and player eligibility.

### **Charged Team Timeouts**

ARTICLE 4. When timeouts are not exhausted, an official shall allow a charged team timeout when requested by any player or head coach when the ball is dead.

- a. Each team is entitled to three charged team timeouts during each half.
- b. After the ball is declared dead and before the snap, a legal substitute may request a timeout if that player is between the nine-yard marks (A.R. 3-3-4-I).
- c. A player who participated during the previous down may request a timeout between the time the ball is declared dead and the snap without being between the nine-yard marks (A.R. 3-3-4-I).
- d. A head coach who is in, or in the vicinity of, their team area or coaching box may request a timeout between the time the ball is declared dead and the next snap.
- e. A player, incoming substitute or head coach may request a head coach's conference with the referee, if the coach believes a rule has been enforced improperly. If the rule enforcement is not changed, the coach's team will be charged a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used.
  - 1. Only the referee may stop the clock for a head coach's conference.
  - 2. A request for a head coach's conference or challenge must be made before the ball is snapped or free-kicked for the next play and before the end of the second or fourth period (Rule 5-2-9).
  - 3. After a head coach's conference or challenge, the full team timeout is granted if charged by the referee.

### **Injury Timeout**

ARTICLE 5. a. In the event of an injured player(s):

- 1. An official will declare a timeout and the player(s) must leave the game. That player must remain out of the game for at least one down, even if that team is granted a team timeout. When in question, officials will take a timeout for an injured player.
- 2. The player(s) may not return to the game until receiving approval of professional medical personnel designated by their institution.
- 3. Medical personnel shall give special attention to players who exhibit signs of a concussion. (See Appendix C).



4. Whenever a participant (player or game official) is bleeding, has blood saturated on the uniform, or has blood on exposed skin, the player or game official shall go to the team area and be given appropriate medical treatment. The player may not return to the game without approval of medical personnel (A.R. 3-3-5-I-VII).
- b. Feigning an injury for any reason is unethical. An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning an injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules. For questionable game action, an institution or conference has the option to consult the national coordinator of football officials who would then facilitate a video review. After the review, the national coordinator will communicate any findings to the conference office for further action. Attention is directed to the statement in The Football Code (Coaching Ethics, Section g).
- c. An injury timeout may follow a charged team timeout.
- d. The referee will declare a timeout for an injured official.
- e. Following a timeout for an injured player of the defensive team, the play clock shall be set at 40 seconds.
- f. *Ten-Second Runoff*: If the player injury is the only reason for stopping the clock (other than that player's helmet or a teammate's helmet coming off, Rule 3-3-9) with less than one minute in the half, the opponent has the option of a 10-second runoff.
  1. The play clock will be set at 40 seconds for an injury to a player of the defensive team and at 25 seconds for an injury to a player of the offensive team (Rule 3-2-4-c-4).
  2. If there is a 10-second runoff the game clock will start on the referee's signal. If there is no 10-second runoff the game clock will start on the snap.
  3. The 10-second runoff may be avoided by the use of a charged team timeout if available.
  4. There is no option of a 10-second runoff if there are injuries to opposing players. (A.R. 3-3-5-VIII and IX)

### Violation Timeouts

ARTICLE 6. For noncompliance with Rule 9-2-2-f, the team will be charged a timeout (Rule 3-4-2-b-2).

### Length of Timeouts

ARTICLE 7. a. A charged full team timeout requested by any player or head coach shall be one minute plus the five-second referee notification and the 25-second play clock interval. (*Exception*: Rule 3-3-4-e-3)

- b. For live-televised games only, a charged team timeout shall be 30 seconds plus the five-second referee notification and the 25-second play clock interval.

However, the head coach may request that one of the allowed three timeouts in each half be a full timeout. This request should be communicated to the referee when the timeout request is made to the officials. The charged team timeout during an extra period (Rule 3-1-3-h) may be a full timeout, at the request of the head coach.

- c. In other than live-televised games, the head coach may request that any charged team timeout be 30 seconds in duration, plus the five-second referee notification and the 25-second play clock interval. The head coach indicates this request visually by touching their hands to their shoulders. The signal must be made promptly after the timeout is requested.
- d. Other timeouts shall be not longer than the referee deems necessary to fulfill the purpose for which they are declared, including a radio or TV timeout, but any timeout may be extended by the referee for the benefit of an injured player (Refer to Appendix A for the guidelines for game officials to use during a serious on-field player injury).
- e. If the team charged with a full team timeout wishes to resume play before the expiration of one minute and its opponent indicates readiness, the referee will declare the ball ready for play.
- f. The length of a referee's timeout depends on the circumstances of each timeout.
- g. Penalty options must be exercised before a team timeout.
- h. The intermission after a safety, try or successful field goal shall be not more than one minute. It may be extended for radio or television.

### **Referee's Notification**

ARTICLE 8. During a full team timeout (Rule 3-3-7-a) the referee shall notify both teams after one minute. Five seconds later the referee shall declare the ball ready for play. During a 30-second team timeout (Rule 3-3-7-b, c) the referee shall notify both teams after 30 seconds. Five seconds later the referee shall declare the ball ready for play.

- a. When a third timeout is charged to a team in either half, the referee shall notify the field captain and head coach of that team.
- b. Unless a visual game clock is the official timepiece, the referee also shall inform each field captain and head coach when approximately two minutes of playing time remain in each half. The referee may order the clock stopped for that purpose.
  - 1. The play-clock count is not interrupted.
  - 2. The clock starts on the snap after the two-minute notification.
- c. If a visual game clock is not the official timing device during the last two minutes of each half, the referee or their representative shall notify each captain and head coach of the time remaining each time the clock is stopped by rule. Also, a representative may leave the team area along the limit line to relay timing information under these conditions.

### **Helmet Comes Off - Timeout**

ARTICLE 9. a. If a player's helmet comes completely off through play, other than as the direct result of a foul by an opponent, the player must leave the game for the next down. The game clock will stop at the end of the down. The player may remain in the game if their team is granted a charged timeout.

- b. When the helmet coming off is the only reason for stopping the clock, other than due to an injury to the player or their teammate (Rule 3-3-5), the following conditions apply (A.R. 3-3-9-I-III):

1. The play clock will be set at 25 seconds if the player is on offense and at 40 seconds if the player is on defense. With one minute or more remaining in either half, the game clock will start on the referee's signal.
  2. *Ten-Second Runoff.* If there is less than one minute in the half the opponent has the option of a 10-second runoff, unless the helmet comes off as the direct result of a foul by the opponent.
  3. If there is a 10-second runoff the game clock will start on the referee's signal. If there is no 10-second runoff the game clock will start on the snap.
  4. The 10-second runoff may be avoided by the use of a charged team timeout, if available.
  5. There is no option for a 10-second runoff if helmets come off opposing players. (A.R. 3-3-9-V)
- c. If the ball carrier's helmet comes off as in paragraph a (above) the ball is dead (Rule 4-1-3-q). If the player is not the ball carrier the ball remains alive, but that player must not continue to participate in the play beyond the immediate action of which they are engaged. Prolonged participation is a personal foul (Rule 9-1-17). By definition such a player is obviously out of the play (Rule 9-1-12-b).
- d. A player who intentionally removes their helmet during the down commits a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct (Rule 9-2-1-a-1-i).

## SECTION 4. Delays/Clock Tactics

### Delaying the Start of a Half

ARTICLE 1. a. Each team shall have its players on the field for the opening play at the scheduled time for the beginning of each half. When both teams refuse to enter the field first for the start of either half, the home team must be the first to enter.

**PENALTY—15 yards from the succeeding spot [S21].**

- b. The home management is responsible for clearing the field of play and end zones at the beginning of each half so the periods may start at the scheduled time. Bands, speeches, presentations, homecoming and similar activities are under the jurisdiction of home management, and a prompt start of each half is mandatory.

**PENALTY—10 yards from the succeeding spot [S21].**

*(Exception:* The referee may waive the penalty for circumstances beyond the control of the home management.)

### Illegal Delay of the Game

ARTICLE 2. a. The officials shall make the ball ready for play consistently throughout the game. The play clock will start its count-down from either 40 seconds or 25 seconds, by rule depending on circumstances. A foul for illegal delay occurs if the play clock is at :00 before the ball is put in play (Rule 3-2-4).

- b. Illegal delay also includes:

1. Deliberately advancing the ball after it is dead.
2. When a team has expended its three timeouts and commits a Rule 9-2-2-f infraction.

3. When a team is not ready to play after an intermission between periods, after a score, after a radio/television/team timeout or anytime the referee orders the ball put in play (A.R. 3-4-2-I).
4. Defensive verbal tactics that disconcert offensive signals (Rule 7-1-5-a-5).
5. Defensive actions designed to cause a false start (Rule 7-1-5-a-4).
6. Putting the ball in play before it is ready for play (Rule 4-1-4).
7. Sideline interference (Rule 9-2-5).
8. Action clearly designed to delay the officials from making the ball ready for play (A.R. 3-4-2-II).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].**

### **Unfair Clock Tactics**

ARTICLE 3. The referee has broad authority in the timing of the game.

- a. The referee shall order the game clock or play clock started or stopped whenever either team conserves or consumes playing time by tactics obviously unfair. This includes starting the game clock on the snap if the foul is by the team ahead in the score. As a guideline, referees should consider invoking this rule when the game clock is under five minutes of each half.
- b. If the game clock is stopped to complete a penalty for a foul by the team ahead in the score (or either team if the score is tied) inside the last two minutes of a half, it will start on the snap, at the option of the offended team. The game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal after Team A throws an illegal forward or backward pass to conserve time (Rule 3-3-2-e-14) (A.R. 3-4-3-I-V).

### **10-Second Runoff from Game Clock—Foul**

ARTICLE 4. a. With the game clock running and less than one minute remaining in either half, before a change of team possession if either team commits a foul that causes the clock to stop immediately, the referee will subtract 10 seconds from the game clock at the option of the offended team. The fouls that fall in this category include but are not limited to:

1. Any foul that prevents the snap (e.g., false start, encroachment, defensive offside by contact in the neutral zone, etc.) (A.R. 3-4-4-III);
2. Intentional grounding to stop the clock;
3. Incomplete illegal forward pass;
4. Backward pass thrown out of bounds to stop the clock;
5. Any other foul committed with the intent of stopping the clock.

The offended team may accept the yardage penalty and decline the 10-second runoff. If the yardage penalty is declined the 10-second runoff is declined by rule.

- b. The 10-second rule does not apply if the game clock is not running when the foul occurs or if the foul does not cause the game clock to stop immediately (e.g., illegal formation).
- c. After the penalty is administered, if there is a 10-second runoff, the game clock starts on the referee's signal. If there is no 10-second runoff, the game

clock starts on the snap. **Note:** This rule supersedes Rule 3-3-2-f. (A. R. 3-3-2-VIII and IX)

- d. If the fouling team has a timeout remaining they may avoid the 10-second runoff by using a timeout. In this case the game clock starts on the snap after the timeout.
- e. The 10-second runoff does not apply when there are offsetting fouls. (A.R. 3-4-4-IV)

### **10-Second Runoff Summary**

ARTICLE 5. The following is a summary of when the 10-second runoff process is in effect:

- a. Injury timeout (Rule 3-3-5-f).
- b. Helmet comes off timeout (Rule 3-3-9-b).
- c. Foul (Rule 3-4-4).
- d. Instant replay (Rule 12-3-6-c).

## **SECTION 5. Substitutions**

### **Substitution Procedures**

ARTICLE 1. Any number of legal substitutes for either team may enter the game between periods, after a score or try, or during the interval between downs only for the purpose of replacing a player(s) or filling a player vacancy(ies).

### **Legal Substitutions**

ARTICLE 2. A legal substitute may replace a player or fill a player vacancy provided none of the following restrictions is violated:

- a. No incoming substitute shall enter the field of play or an end zone while the ball is in play.
- b. No player, in excess of 11, shall leave the field of play or an end zone while the ball is in play (A.R. 3-5-2-I).

### **PENALTY [a-b] Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S22].**

- c.
  1. An incoming legal substitute must enter the field of play directly from their team area, and a substitute, player or departing player must depart at the sideline nearest their team area and proceed to their team area.
  2. A departing player must immediately leave the field of play, including the end zones. A departing player who leaves the huddle or their position within three seconds, after a substitute becomes a player, is considered to have left immediately.
- d. Substitutes who become players (Rule 2-27-9) must remain in the game for at least one play and replaced players must remain out of the game for at least one play, except during the interval between periods, after a score, or when a timeout is charged to a team or to the referee with the exception of a live-ball out of bounds or an incomplete forward pass (A.R. 3-5-2-III and VII).

### **PENALTY [c-d]—Dead-ball foul: Five yards from the succeeding spot**

- e. When Team A sends in its substitutes, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped until Team B has been given an opportunity to substitute. While in the process of substitution or simulated substitution, Team A is

prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious attempt of creating a defensive disadvantage. If the ball is ready for play, the game officials will not permit the ball to be snapped until Team B has placed substitutes in position and replaced players have left the field of play. Team B must react promptly with its substitutes.

**PENALTY—(First Offense)—Dead-ball foul. Delay of game on Team B for not completing its substitutions promptly, or delay of game on Team A for causing the play clock to expire. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S21]. The referee will then notify the head coach that any further use of this tactic will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul.**

**PENALTY—(Second or more offense)—Dead-ball foul, team unsportsmanlike conduct. An official will sound their whistle immediately. 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S27].**

### **More Than Eleven Players on the Field**

ARTICLE 3. a. Team A may not break the huddle with more than 11 players nor keep more than 11 players in the huddle or in a formation for more than three seconds. Officials shall stop the action whether or not the ball has been snapped.

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Five yards at the previous spot. [S22]**

b. Team B is allowed to briefly retain more than 11 players on the field to anticipate the offensive formation, but it may not have more than 11 players on the field when the ball is snapped. The infraction is treated as a live-ball foul (A.R. 3-5-3-I-VII).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards at the previous spot. [S22]**

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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

#### Dead Ball Becomes Alive

ARTICLE 1. After a dead ball is ready for play, it becomes a live ball when it is legally snapped or legally free-kicked. A ball snapped or free-kicked before it is ready for play remains dead (A.R. 2-16-4-I, A.R. 4-1-4-I and II, A.R. 7-1-3-IV, and A.R. 7-1-5-I and II).

#### Live Ball Becomes Dead

ARTICLE 2. a. A live ball becomes a dead ball as provided in the rules or when an official sounds their whistle (even though inadvertently) or otherwise signals the ball dead (A.R. 4-2-1-II and A.R. 4-2-4-I).

- b. If an official sounds their whistle inadvertently or otherwise signals the ball dead during a down (Rules 4-1-3-k, m and n) (A. R. 4-1-2-1-V):
1. When the ball is in player possession, the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or repeat the down.
  2. When the ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass or illegal pass, the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or repeat the down (**Exception:** Rule 12-3-3-d).
  3. During a legal forward pass or a free or scrimmage kick, then the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down repeated (**Exception:** Rule 12-3-3-d).
  4. After Team B gains possession on the try or during an extra period, then the try is over or the extra-period possession series is ended.
- c. If a foul or violation occurs during any of the above downs, the penalty or violation privilege shall be administered as in any other play situation if not in conflict with other rules (A.R. 4-1-2-I and II).

#### Ball Declared Dead

ARTICLE 3. A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound their whistle or declare it dead:

- a. When it goes out of bounds other than a kick that scores a field goal after touching the uprights or crossbar; when a ball carrier is out of bounds; or when a ball carrier is so held that their forward progress is stopped. When in question, the ball is dead (A.R. 4-2-1-II).
- b. When any part of the ball carrier's body, except the hand or foot, touches the ground or when the ball carrier is tackled or otherwise falls and loses possession of the ball as they contact the ground with any part of their

body, except the hand or foot [**Exception:** The ball remains alive when an offensive player has simulated a kick or at the snap is in position to kick the ball held for a place kick by a teammate. The ball may be kicked, passed or advanced by rule] (A.R. 4-1-3-I).

- c. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, field goal or successful try occurs; or when a free kick or a scrimmage kick that is untouched by Team B beyond the neutral zone touches the ground in Team B's end zone (Rules 6-1-7-a, 6-3-9, and A.R. 6-3-9-I).
- d. When, during a try, a dead-ball rule applies (Rule 8-3-2-d-5).
- e. When a player of the kicking team catches or recovers any free kick or a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone.
- f. When a free kick, scrimmage kick or any other loose ball comes to rest and no player attempts to secure it.
- g. When a scrimmage kick or a free kick is caught or recovered by any Team B player after a valid or invalid fair-catch signal by a Team B player; or when an invalid fair-catch signal is made after a catch or recovery by Team B (Rules 2-8-1 through 3).
- h. When there is a return kick or a scrimmage kick is made beyond the neutral zone.
- i. When a forward pass is ruled incomplete.
- j. When, before a change of team possession on fourth down or a try, a Team A fumble is caught or recovered by a Team A player other than the fumbler (Rules 7-2-2-a and -b and 8-3-2-d-5).
- k. When a live ball not in player possession touches anything inbounds other than a player, a player's equipment, an official, an official's equipment or the ground (inadvertent-whistle provisions apply).
- l. When there is a simultaneous catch or recovery of a live ball.
- m. When the ball becomes illegal while in play (inadvertent-whistle provisions apply).
- n. When a live ball comes into possession of an official (inadvertent-whistle provisions apply).
- o. When a ball carrier simulates placing their knee on the ground.
- p. When an airborne pass receiver of either team is held so that they are prevented from immediately returning to the ground (A.R. 7-3-6-III).
- q. When a ball carrier's helmet comes completely off.
- r. When a ball carrier obviously begins a feet-first slide. Any time a ball carrier simulates or fakes a feet-first slide, the ball should be declared dead by the on-field officials at that point. (A.R. 4-1-3-III and IV)

### Ball Ready for Play

ARTICLE 4. No player shall put the ball in play before it is ready for play (A.R. 4-1-4-I and II).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S19].**

### Play-Clock Count

ARTICLE 5. The ball shall be put in play within 40 or 25 seconds after it is made ready for play (Rule 3-2-4), unless, during that interval, play is suspended. If play is suspended, the play-clock count will start again.



**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul for delay of game. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S21].**

## SECTION 2. Out of Bounds

### Player Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 1. a. A player is out of bounds when any part of their person touches anything, other than another player or game official, on or outside a boundary line (Rule 2-27-15) (A.R. 4-2-1-I and II).

- b. An out-of-bounds player who becomes airborne remains out of bounds until they touch the ground in bounds without simultaneously being out of bounds.
- c. A player who touches a pylon is out of bounds.

### Held Ball Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 2. A ball in player possession is out of bounds when either the ball or any part of the ball carrier touches the ground or anything else that is out of bounds, or that is on or outside a boundary line, except another player or game official.

### Loose Ball Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 3. a. A ball not in player control, other than a kick that scores a field goal, is out of bounds when it touches the ground, a player, a game official or anything else that is out of bounds, or that is on or outside a boundary line.

- b. A ball that touches a pylon is out of bounds behind the goal line.
- c. If a live ball not in player possession crosses a boundary line and then is declared out of bounds, it is out of bounds at the crossing point.

### Out of Bounds at Forward Point

ARTICLE 4. a. If a live ball is declared out of bounds and the ball does not cross a boundary line, it is out of bounds at the ball's most forward point when it was declared dead (A.R. 4-2-4-I) (**Exception:** Rule 8-5-1-a, A.R. 8-5-1-I).

- b. A touchdown is scored if the ball is inbounds and has broken the plane of the goal line (Rule 2-12-2) before or simultaneous to the ball carrier going out of bounds.
- c. A receiver who is in the opponent's end zone and contacting the ground is credited with a completion if they reach over the sideline or end line and catch a legal pass.
- d. The most forward point of the ball when declared out of bounds between the goal lines is the point of forward progress. (A.R. 8-2-1-I and A.R. 8-5-1-VII) (**Exception:** When a ball carrier is airborne as they cross the sideline (including a striding runner), forward progress is determined by the position of the ball as it crosses the sideline (A.R. 8-2-1-II-III and V-IX).

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# RULE 5

## Series of Downs, Line to Gain

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

#### When to Award Series

ARTICLE 1. a. A series (Rule 2-24-1) of up to four consecutive scrimmage downs shall be awarded to the team that is next to put the ball in play by a snap after a free kick, touchback, fair catch, or change in team possession, or to the offensive team in overtime.

- b. A new series shall be awarded to Team A if it is in legal possession of the ball on or beyond its line to gain when the ball is declared dead.
- c. A new series shall be awarded to Team B if, after fourth down, Team A has failed to earn a first down (A.R. 10-1-5-I).
- d. A new series shall be awarded to Team B if Team A's scrimmage kick goes out of bounds or comes to rest and no player attempts to secure it (**Exception:** Rule 8-5-1-a).
- e. A new series shall be awarded to the team in legal possession when the ball is declared dead:
  - 1. If a change of team possession occurs during the down.
  - 2. If a scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone (**Exceptions:** (1) When the down is repeated; (2) Rule 6-3-7).
  - 3. If an accepted penalty awards the ball to the offended team.
  - 4. If an accepted penalty mandates a first down.
- f. A new series shall be awarded to Team B whenever Team B, after a scrimmage kick, elects to take the ball at a spot of illegal touching (**Exception:** When the down is repeated) (Rules 6-3-2-a and b).

#### Line to Gain

ARTICLE 2. a. The line to gain for a series shall be established 10 yards in advance of the most forward point of the ball; but if this line is in the opponent's end zone, the goal line becomes the line to gain.

- b. The line to gain is established when the ball is made ready for play before the first down of the new series.

#### Forward Progress

ARTICLE 3. a. The most forward point of the ball when declared dead between the end lines shall be the determining point in measuring distance gained or lost by either team during any down (**Exceptions:** 1. Rule 8-5-1, A.R.

8-5-1-I. 2. When an airborne pass receiver of either team completes a catch inbounds after an opponent has driven the receiver backward and the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch, the forward progress is where the player gained and maintained firm control of the ball.) The ball always shall be placed with its length axis parallel to the sideline before measuring. (Rule 4-1-3-p) (A.R. 5-1-3-I, III, IV and VI, and A.R. 7-3-6-V).

- b. Questionable distance for a first down should be measured without request. Unnecessary measurements to determine first downs shall not be granted.
- c. No request for a measurement shall be granted after the ball is ready for play.

### **Continuity of Downs Broken**

ARTICLE 4. The continuity of a series of scrimmage downs is broken when:

- a. Team possession of the ball changes during a down.
- b. A scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone.
- c. A kick goes out of bounds.
- d. A kick comes to rest and no player attempts to secure it.
- e. At the end of a down, Team A has earned a first down.
- f. After fourth down, Team A has failed to earn a first down.
- g. An accepted penalty mandates a first down.
- h. There is a score.
- i. A touchback is awarded to either team.
- j. The second period ends.
- k. The fourth period ends.

## **SECTION 2. Down and Possession After a Penalty**

### **Foul During Free Kick Down**

ARTICLE 1. When a scrimmage down follows the penalty for a foul committed during a free kick down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with a new line to gain.

### **Penalty Resulting in New Series**

ARTICLE 2. It is a new series with a new line to gain:

- a. After a penalty that leaves the ball in possession of Team A beyond its line to gain.
- b. After a penalty that mandates a first down.

### **Foul Before Change of Team Possession**

ARTICLE 3. a. If a penalty is accepted for a foul that occurs between the goal lines before a change of team possession during a down, the ball belongs to Team A. The down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves loss of a down, mandates a first down, or leaves the ball on or beyond the line to gain (*Exceptions:* Rules 8-3-3-b-1, 10-2-3, 10-2-4, and 10-2-5). (A.R. 10-2-3-I)

- b. If the penalty involves loss of a down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series.

**Foul After Change of Team Possession**

ARTICLE 4. If a penalty is accepted for a foul that occurs during a down after a change of team possession, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The down and distance established by any such penalty shall be first down with a new line to gain (*Exception:* Rule 10-2-5-a).

**Penalty Declined**

ARTICLE 5. If a penalty is declined, the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if the foul had not occurred.

**Foul Between Downs**

ARTICLE 6. After a distance penalty incurred between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as that established before the foul occurred, unless enforcement for a foul by Team B leaves the ball on or beyond the line to gain or a penalty mandates a first down (Rule 9-1) (A.R. 5-2-6-I and A.R. 10-1-5-I-III).

**Foul Between Series**

ARTICLE 7. a. The penalty for any dead-ball foul (including live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls) that occurs after a series ends and before the ball is ready for play shall be completed before the line to gain is established.

b. The penalty for any dead-ball foul that occurs after the ball is ready for play shall be completed after the line to gain is established (A.R. 5-2-7-I-V).

**Fouls by Both Teams**

ARTICLE 8. If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated (Rule 10-1-4 Exceptions) (A.R. 10-1-4-III-VI, VII).

**Rule Decisions Final**

ARTICLE 9. No rule decision may be changed after the ball is next legally snapped, legally free-kicked or the second or fourth periods have ended (Rules 3-2-1-a, 3-3-4-e-2 and 11-1). (*Exception:* The number of a down may be corrected any time within that series of downs or before the ball is legally next put in play after that series.)

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# RULE 6

## Kicks

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### SECTION 1. Free Kicks

#### Restraining Lines

ARTICLE 1. For any free kick formation, the kicking team's restraining line shall be the yard line through the most forward point from which the ball shall be kicked, and the receiving team's restraining line shall be the yard line 10 yards beyond that point. Unless relocated by a penalty, the kicking team's restraining line on a kickoff shall be its 35-yard line, and for a free kick after a safety, its 20-yard line.

#### Free Kick Formation

ARTICLE 2. a. A ball from a free kick formation must be kicked legally and from some point on Team A's restraining line (*Exception:* Rule 6-1-2-c-4) and on or between the hash marks. The referee will declare the ball ready for play when the officials are in position after the kicker has received the ball. After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may only be relocated after a charged timeout or during a subsequent kick.

**PENALTY—Dead ball foul. Illegal kick. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S19]. (A.R. 6-1-2-I).**

- b. After the ball has been made ready for play, all players on the kicking team except the kicker must be no more than five yards behind their restraining line. A player satisfies this rule when one foot is on or beyond the line five yards behind the restraining line. If one player is more than five yards behind the restraining line and any other player kicks the ball, it is a foul for an illegal formation. (A.R. 6-1-2-VII)
- c. When the ball is kicked (A.R. 6-1-2-I-IV):
  1. Each Team A player, except the holder and kicker of a place kick, must be behind the ball (A.R. 6-1-2-V) [S18].
  2. All Team A players must be inbounds [S19].
  3. At least four Team A players must be on each side of the kicker [S19]. (AR 6-1-2-II-IV)
  4. After a safety, when a punt or drop kick is used, the ball may be kicked from behind the kicking team's restraining line. If a yardage penalty for a live-ball foul is enforced from the previous spot, administration is from the 20-yard line, unless the kicking team's restraining line has been relocated by a previous penalty [S18 or appropriate signal].
  5. All players of Team A must have been between the nine-yard marks after the ready-for-play signal [S19].

**PENALTY [b-c5]—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot, or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B, or from the spot where the ball is placed after a touchback [S18 or S19] (A.R. 6-1-2-VI).**

6. All Team B players must be inbounds [S19].
7. All Team B players must be behind their restraining line [S18].

**PENALTY [c6-c7]—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S18 or S19].**

- d. After the ball is ready for play and for any reason falls from the tee, Team A shall not kick the ball and the official shall sound their whistle immediately.

### **Touching and Recovery of a Free Kick; Illegal Touching**

ARTICLE 3. a. No Team A player may touch a free-kicked ball until after:

1. It touches a Team B player (**Exception:** Rules 6-1-4 and 6-5-1-b);
2. It breaks the plane of and remains beyond Team B's restraining line (**Exception:** Rule 6-4-1) (A.R. 2-12-5-I); or
3. It touches any player, the ground, an official or anything else beyond Team B's restraining line.

Thereafter, all players of Team A become eligible to touch, recover or catch the kick.

- b. Any other touching by Team A is *illegal touching*, a violation that, when the ball becomes dead, gives the receiving team the privilege of taking the ball at the spot of the violation.
- c. If there is an accepted penalty for a live-ball foul by either team, or if there are offsetting fouls, the illegal touching privilege is canceled (A.R. 6-1-3-I).
- d. Illegal touching in Team A's end zone is ignored.

### **Forced Touching Disregarded**

ARTICLE 4. a. A player blocked by an opponent into a free kick is not, while inbounds, deemed to have touched the kick. (A. R. 2-11-4-I)

- b. An inbounds player touched by a ball either batted or illegally kicked by an opponent is not deemed to have touched the ball. (Rule 2-11-4-c)

### **Free Kick at Rest**

ARTICLE 5. If a free kick comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot.

### **Free Kick Caught or Recovered**

ARTICLE 6. a. If a free kick is caught or recovered by a player of the receiving team, the ball continues in play (**Exceptions:** Rules 4-1-3-g, 6-1-7, and 6-5-1 and 2). If caught or recovered by a player of the kicking team, the ball becomes dead. The ball belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot, unless the kicking team is in legal possession when the ball is declared dead. In the latter case, the ball belongs to the kicking team.

- b. When opposing players, each eligible to touch the ball, simultaneously recover a rolling kick or catch a free kick, the simultaneous possession makes the ball dead.

- c. A kick declared dead in joint possession is awarded to the receiving team.

### **Ball Dead in End Zone**

ARTICLE 7. a. When a free kick untouched by Team B touches the ground on or behind Team B's goal line, the ball becomes dead and belongs to Team B.

- b. If the result of the free kick is a touchback (Rule 8-6) for Team B, they will put the ball in play at their 25-yard line.

### **Fouls by Kicking Team**

ARTICLE 8. Penalties for all fouls by the kicking team during a free kick play other than kick-catch interference (Rule 6-4) may be enforced at the previous spot with the down repeated or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B, at the option of Team B.

### **Foul Against Kicker**

ARTICLE 9. The kicker of a free kick may not be blocked until they have advanced five yards beyond the restraining line or the kick has touched a player, an official or the ground. (Rule 9-1-16-c)

**PENALTY—15 yards from the previous spot [S40].**

### **Illegal Wedge Formation**

ARTICLE 10. a. A wedge is defined as two or more players aligned shoulder to shoulder within two yards of each other.

- b. Free-kick down only: After the ball has been kicked, it is illegal for two or more members of the receiving team intentionally to form a wedge for the purpose of blocking for the ball carrier. This is a live-ball foul, whether or not there is contact between opponents.

**PENALTY—Noncontact foul. 15 yards, spot of the foul, or 15 yards, spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B if this is behind the spot of the foul. 15 yards, previous spot with the down repeated if the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team A. [S27]**

- c. Formation of the wedge is not illegal when the kick is from an obvious onside kick formation.
- d. There is no foul if the play results in a touchback, a foul for free kick out of bounds or fair catch.

### **Player Out Of Bounds**

ARTICLE 11. A Team A player who goes out of bounds during a free kick play may not return inbounds during the down (*Exception:* This does not apply to a Team A player who is blocked out of bounds and returns in-bounds immediately).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot, or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B, or from the spot where the ball is placed after a touchback [S19]**

### Eligibility to Block

ARTICLE 12. No Team A player may block an opponent until Team A is eligible to touch a free-kicked ball. (A.R. 6-1-3-II)

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot, or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B, or from the spot where the ball is placed after a touchback [S19].**

## SECTION 2. Free Kick Out of Bounds

### Kicking Team

ARTICLE 1. If a free kick goes out of bounds between the goal lines untouched by an inbounds player of Team B, it is a foul (A.R. 6-2-1-I-II and 4-2-1-III).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot; or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B; or the receiving team may put the ball in play 30 yards beyond Team A's restraining line at the hash mark [S19].**

### Receiving Team

ARTICLE 2. If a free kick goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball belongs to the receiving team at the hash mark. If a free kick goes out of bounds behind the goal line, the ball belongs to the team defending that goal line (A.R. 6-2-2-I-IV).

## SECTION 3. Scrimmage Kicks

### Behind the Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 1. a. A scrimmage kick that fails to cross the neutral zone continues in play. All players may catch or recover the ball behind the neutral zone and advance it (A.R. 6-3-1-I-III).

b. The blocking of a scrimmage kick by an opponent of the kicking team who is not more than three yards beyond the neutral zone is considered to have occurred within or behind that zone (Rule 2-11-5).

### Beyond the Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 2. a. No inbounds player of the kicking team shall touch a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone before it touches an opponent. This is *illegal touching*, a violation that, when the ball becomes dead, gives the receiving team the privilege of taking the ball at the spot of the violation (**Exception:** Rule 6-3-4) (A.R. 2-12-2-I and A.R. 6-3-2-I).

b. This privilege is canceled if there is an accepted penalty for a live-ball foul by either team (A.R. 6-3-2-I-IV, A.R. 6-3-11-I-III and A.R. 10-1-4-VII).

c. The privilege is canceled if there are offsetting fouls.

d. Illegal touching on a try, in extra periods, or in Team A's end zone is ignored.



### **All Become Eligible**

ARTICLE 3. When a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone touches a player of the receiving team who is inbounds, any player may catch or recover the ball (Rule 6-3-1-b) (*Exceptions:* Rules 6-3-4 and 6-5-1-b).

### **Forced Touching Disregarded**

ARTICLE 4. a. A player blocked by an opponent into a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone shall not, while inbounds, be deemed to have touched the kick (A.R. 6-3-4-I-V and 2-11-4-I).

b. An inbounds player touched by a ball either batted or illegally kicked by an opponent is not deemed to have touched the ball (A.R. 6-3-4-II). (Rule 2-11-4-c)

### **Catch or Recovery by Receiving Team**

ARTICLE 5. If a player of the receiving team catches or recovers a scrimmage kick, the ball continues in play (*Exceptions:* Rules 4-1-3-g, 6-3-9, 6-5-1 and 2) (A.R. 8-4-2-V).

### **Catch or Recovery by Kicking Team**

ARTICLE 6. a. If a player of the kicking team catches or recovers a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone, the ball becomes dead (A.R. 6-3-1-IV). The ball belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot, unless the kicking team is in legal possession when the ball is declared dead. In the latter case, the ball belongs to the kicking team. (*Exception:* Rule 8-4-2-b).

b. If opposing players who are each eligible to touch the ball simultaneously catch or recover a scrimmage kick, the simultaneous possession makes the ball dead. A kick declared dead in joint possession of opposing players is awarded to the receiving team (Rules 2-4-4 and 4-1-3-l).

### **Out of Bounds Between Goal Lines or at Rest Inbounds**

ARTICLE 7. If a scrimmage kick goes out of bounds between the goal lines, or if it comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot (*Exception:* Rule 8-4-2-b).

### **Out of Bounds Behind Goal Line**

ARTICLE 8. If a scrimmage kick (other than one that scores a field goal) goes out of bounds behind a goal line, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team defending that goal line (Rule 8-4-2-b).

### **Touching Ground On or Behind Goal Line**

ARTICLE 9. If a scrimmage kick untouched by Team B beyond the neutral zone touches the ground on or behind Team B's goal line, the ball becomes dead and belongs to Team B. (Rule 8-4-2-b) (A.R. 6-3-9-I-II).

### **Legal and Illegal Kicks**

ARTICLE 10. a. A legal scrimmage kick is a punt, drop kick or place kick made according to rule.

b. A return kick is an illegal kick, a live-ball foul that causes the ball to become dead (Rule 2-16-8).

**PENALTY—For a return kick (live-ball foul): Five yards from the spot of the foul [S31].**

- c. A scrimmage kick made when the kicker's entire body is beyond the neutral zone is an illegal kick, a live-ball foul that causes the ball to become dead.

**PENALTY—For an illegal kick beyond the neutral zone (live-ball foul): Five yards from the previous spot and loss of down [S31 and S9].**

- d. No device or material may be used to mark the spot of a scrimmage place kick or elevate the ball. This is a live-ball foul at the snap.

**PENALTY—Five yards from the previous spot [S19].**

### **Loose Behind the Goal Line**

ARTICLE 11. If a scrimmage kick untouched by Team B after crossing the neutral zone is batted in Team B's end zone by a player of Team A, it is a violation for illegal touching (Rule 6-3-2). The spot of the violation is Team B's 20-yard line. This is a special case of batting in the end zone and is not a foul. (A.R. 6-3-11-I-V and A.R. 2-12-2-I).

### **Out-of-Bounds Player**

ARTICLE 12. No Team A player who goes out of bounds during a scrimmage kick play may return inbounds during the down (*Exception:* This does not apply to a Team A player who is blocked out of bounds and attempts to return inbounds immediately).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot or if the scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone, five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B [S19].**

### **Fouls by Kicking Team**

ARTICLE 13. Penalties for all fouls by the kicking team other than kick-catch interference (Rule 6-4) during a scrimmage kick play (except field-goal attempts) in which the ball crosses the neutral zone may be enforced by rule either at the previous spot as the basic spot with the down repeated (*Exception:* Penalty option is a safety for fouls in Team A's end zone.) or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B, at the option of Team B. (A.R. 6-3-13-I-III)

### **Defensive Linemen on Scrimmage Kick Plays**

ARTICLE 14. a. If Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap, any Team B player within one yard of the line of scrimmage must be aligned completely outside the frame of the body of the snapper at the snap (A.R. 6-3-14-I and II).

- b. If Team A is in a formation to attempt a place kick (field goal or try) it is illegal for three Team B players on their line of scrimmage inside the blocking zone to align shoulder-to-shoulder and move forward together after the snap with primary contact against a single Team A player (A.R. 6-3-14-III and IV).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards, previous spot. [S19]**

## SECTION 4. Opportunity To Catch a Kick

### Interference With Opportunity

ARTICLE 1. a. If an inbounds player of the receiving team is located where they could catch a free kick or a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone, and if the player is attempting to do so, they must be given an unimpeded opportunity to catch the kick (A.R. 6-3-1-III, A.R. 6-4-1-V, VI and IX).

- b. It is an interference foul if, before the receiver touches the ball, a Team A player enters the area defined by the width of the receiver's shoulders and extending one yard in front of him. When in question it is a foul. (A.R. 6-4-1-X-XIII)
- c. This protection ends when the kick touches the ground (**Exception:** Free kick, par. f below), when any player of Team B muffs or touches a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone, or when any player of Team B muffs or touches a free kick in the field of play or in the end zone (**Exception:** Rule 6-5-1-b) (A.R. 6-4-1-IV).
- d. If interference with a potential receiver is the result of a player being blocked by an opponent, it is not a foul.
- e. It is an interference foul if the kicking team contacts the potential receiver before, or simultaneous to, their first touching the ball (A.R. 6-4-1-II, III, and VIII). When in question, it is an interference foul.
- f. During a free kick a player of the receiving team in position to receive the ball has the same kick-catch and fair-catch protection whether the ball is kicked directly off the tee or is immediately driven to the ground, strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of the ball kicked directly off the tee.
- g. If contact by Team A is deemed to be a targeting foul (Rules 9-1-3 and 9-1-4) or any other personal foul that interferes with the receiver's opportunity to catch a kick, it may be ruled either as interference or as a targeting or personal foul. The 15-yard penalty is enforced at the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B or at the spot of the foul, at the option of Team B.

**PENALTY [a-g]—For foul between the goal lines (other than a foul behind the B-25 on a free kick): Receiving team's ball, first down, 15 yards beyond the spot of the foul for an interference foul [S33].**

**For a foul on a free kick play behind the B-25-yard line against a player who has given a valid fair catch signal: Penalize from the B-25 [S33].**

**For foul behind the goal line: Award a touchback and penalize from the succeeding spot [S33].**

**Flagrant offenders shall be ejected or disqualified [S47].**

## SECTION 5. Fair Catch

### Dead Where Caught

ARTICLE 1. a. If a Team B player makes a fair catch, the ball becomes dead where caught and belongs to Team B at that spot. [**Exception:** If a Team B

player makes a fair catch of a free kick behind Team B's 25-yard line, the ball belongs to Team B at its own 25-yard line.

The next snap shall be from midway between the hashmarks, unless a different position on or between the hashmarks is selected by the team designated to put the ball in play before the play clock is at 25 seconds or before any subsequent ready-for-play signal. After the play clock is at 25 seconds or any subsequent ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated only after a charged team timeout unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls.]

- b. If a Team B player makes a valid fair catch signal, the unimpeded opportunity to catch a free or scrimmage kick continues if this player muffs the kick and still has an opportunity to complete the catch. If that player (or another Team B player) subsequently catches the kick, the ball belongs to Team B where the player making the signal first touched it. This protection terminates when the kick touches the ground. (A.R. 6-5-1-I-II).
- c. Rules pertaining to a fair catch apply only when a scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone or during free kicks.
- d. The purpose of the fair catch provision is to protect the receiver who, by using the fair catch signal, agrees they or a teammate will not advance after the catch (A.R. 6-5-5-III).
- e. The ball shall be put in play by a snap by the receiving team at the spot of the catch if the ball is caught (**Exceptions:** Rules 6-5-1-a, 6-5-1-b, 7-1-3 and 8-6-1-b).

### No Advance

ARTICLE 2. No Team B player shall carry a caught or recovered ball more than two steps in any direction after any Team B player gives a valid or invalid fair catch signal (A.R. 6-5-2-I-III).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul, delay of game. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].**

### Invalid Signals: Catch or Recovery

ARTICLE 3. a. A catch after an invalid signal is not a fair catch, and the ball is dead where caught or recovered. (**Exception:** During a free kick, if a Team B receiver gives any waving signal that does not meet all of the requirements of a valid fair catch signal, and subsequently catches the ball behind the B-25 yard line the ball belongs to Team B at its own 25-yard line).

- b. If the signal follows a catch or recovery, the ball is dead when the signal is first given (A.R. 6-5-1-I).
- c. Invalid signals beyond the neutral zone apply only to Team B.
- d. An invalid signal beyond the neutral zone is possible only when the ball has crossed the neutral zone (Rule 2-16-7) (A.R. 6-5-3-I).

### Illegal Block or Contact

ARTICLE 4. A player of Team B who has made a valid or invalid signal for a fair catch and does not touch the ball shall not block or foul an opponent during that down (A.R. 6-5-4-I and II).

**PENALTY—Free kick: Receiving team's ball 10 yards from the spot of the foul [S40]. Scrimmage kick: 10 yards, postscrimmage kick enforcement [S40]. If a Personal Foul is committed in**

**conjunction with this action, the penalty is 15 yards and  
flagrant offenders shall be ejected or disqualified.**

### **No Tackling**

ARTICLE 5. No player of the kicking team shall tackle or block an opponent who has completed a fair catch. Only the player making a fair catch signal has this protection (A.R. 6-5-5-I and III).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Receiving team's ball 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S38].**

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# RULE 7

## Snapping and Passing the Ball

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### SECTION 1. The Scrimmage

#### Starting With a Snap

ARTICLE 1. a. The ball shall be put in play by a legal snap unless the rules provide for a legal free kick (A.R. 4-1-4-I and II).

b. No player shall put the ball in play before it is ready for play (Rule 4-1-4 and A.R. 4-1-4-I and II).

**PENALTY [a-b]—Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S19].**

c. The ball may not be snapped in a side zone (Rule 2-31-6). If the starting point for any scrimmage down is in a side zone, the ball shall be transferred to the hash mark.

#### Shift and False Start

ARTICLE 2. a. *Shift.* After a huddle (Rule 2-14) or shift (Rule 2-22-1) and before the snap, all Team A players must come to an absolute stop and remain stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head or arms for at least one full second before the ball is snapped. (A.R. 7-1-2-I).

b. *False Start.* Each of the following is a false start by Team A if it occurs prior to the snap after the ball is ready for play and all players are in scrimmage formation:

1. Any movement by one or more players that simulates the start of a play.
2. The snapper moving to another position.
3. A restricted lineman (Rule 2-27-4) moving their hand(s) or making any quick movement. [**Exceptions:** 1. It is not a false start if a Team A lineman immediately reacts when threatened by a Team B player in the neutral zone (Rule 7-1-5-a-2) (A.R. 7-1-3-V) 2. Rule 7-1-3-a-3].
4. An offensive player making any quick, jerky movement before the snap, including but not limited to:
  - (a) A lineman moving their foot, shoulder, arm, body or head in a quick, jerky motion in any direction.
  - (b) The snapper shifting or moving the ball, moving their thumb or fingers, flexing their elbows, jerking their head, or dipping their shoulders or buttocks.
  - (c) The quarterback making any quick, jerky movement that simulates the beginning of a play.

- (d) A back simulating receiving the ball by making any quick, jerky movement that simulates the beginning of a play.
5. The offensive team never coming to a one-second stop prior to the snap after the ball is ready for play (A.R. 7-1-2-IV). This is an illegal shift that converts to a false start.

### Offensive Team Requirements—Prior to the Snap

ARTICLE 3. Each of the following (a-d) is a dead-ball foul. Officials should blow the whistle and not allow the play to continue. After the ball is ready for play and before it is snapped:

- a. *Snapper*. The snapper (Rule 2-27-8):
1. May not move to a different position nor have any part of their body beyond the neutral zone;
  2. May not lift the ball, move it beyond the neutral zone or simulate the start of a play;
  3. May take their hand(s) off the ball, but only if this does not simulate the start of a play.
- b. *Nine-Yard Marks*.
1. Each Team A substitute must have been between the nine-yard marks. Team A players who participated in the previous down must have been between the nine-yard marks after the previous down and before the next snap (A.R. 3-3-4-I).
  2. All Team A players must have been between the nine-yard marks after a charged team timeout, an injury timeout, a media timeout or the end of a period.
- c. *Encroachment*. Once the snapper is established, no other Team A player may be in or beyond the neutral zone [**Exceptions:** (1) Substitutes and departing players; and (2) offensive players in a scrimmage kick formation who break the neutral zone with their hand(s) to point at opponents].
- d. *False Start*. No Team A player may commit a false start (Rule 7-1-2-b) or contact an opponent (A.R. 7-1-3-III).

**PENALTY—[a-d] Dead-ball foul: Five yards from the succeeding spot. [S7 and S19 or S20].**

### Offensive Team Requirements—At the Snap

ARTICLE 4. Violation of each of the following (a-c) is a live-ball foul; the play is allowed to continue.

- a. *Formation*. At the snap Team A must be in a formation that meets these requirements:
1. All players must be inbounds.
  2. All players must be either linemen or backs (Rule 2-27-4, A.R. 7-1-4-VIII).
  3. At least five linemen must wear jerseys numbered 50 through 79 (**Exception:** When the snap is from a scrimmage kick formation, par. 5 below.)
  4. No more than four players may be backs.

5. In a scrimmage kick formation at the snap (Rule 2-16-10) Team A may have fewer than five linemen numbered 50-79, subject to the following conditions:
  - (a) Any and all linemen not numbered 50-79 who are ineligible receiver(s) by position become exceptions to the numbering rule when the snapper is established.
  - (b) Any and all such numbering-exception players must be on the line and may not be on the end of the line. Otherwise, Team A commits a foul for an illegal formation.
  - (c) Any and all such players are exceptions to the numbering rule throughout the down and remain ineligible receivers unless they become eligible under Rule 7-3-5 (forward pass touched by an official or a Team B player).

The conditions in 5(a)–5(c) are no longer in effect if prior to the snap a period ends or there is a timeout charged to the referee or one of the teams.

b. *Man in Motion.*

1. One back may be in motion, but that back may not be moving toward their opponent's goal line.
2. The player who goes in motion may not start from the line of scrimmage unless they first become a back and come to a complete stop.
3. A player in motion at the snap must have satisfied the one-second rule—i.e., that player may not start their motion before any shift has ended (Rule 2-22-1-c).

c. *Illegal Shift.* At the snap, Team A may not execute an illegal shift (Rule 7-1-2-a). (A.R. 7-1-3-I-II).

**PENALTY [a-c]—Live-ball foul: Five yards from the previous spot [S19 or S20]. For live-ball fouls occurring when or after the snap starts during scrimmage kick plays other than field goal plays: Five yards from the previous spot or if the kick crosses the neutral zone, five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B [S19 or S20].**

### Defensive Team Requirements

ARTICLE 5. The defensive team requirements are as follows:

- a. Each of the following (1-5) is a dead ball foul. Officials should blow the whistle and not allow the play to continue. After the ball is ready for play and before the ball is snapped:
  1. No player may touch the ball except when moved illegally as in Rule 7-1-3-a-1, nor may any player contact an opponent or in any other way interfere with him.(A.R. 7-1-5-I-II).
  2. No player may enter the neutral zone causing an offensive lineman to react immediately or commit any other dead-ball offside foul (Rules 2-18-2 and 7-1-2-b-3-Exception) (A.R. 7-1-3-V and A.R. 7-1-5-III).
  3. No player may cross the neutral zone and without making contact continue their charge toward any back.



**PENALTY [1-3]—Dead-ball foul, offside. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S18].**

4. Player(s) aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage may not make quick, abrupt or exaggerated actions that are not part of normal defensive player movement (A.R. 7-1-5-IV).
5. No player shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play. No player may call defensive signals that simulate the sound or cadence of, or otherwise interfere with, offensive starting signals.

**PENALTY [4-5]—Dead-ball foul, delay of game. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S21].**

- b. When the snap starts:
  1. No player may be in or beyond the neutral zone at the snap.
  2. All players must be inbounds.

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S18].**

### **Handing the Ball Forward**

ARTICLE 6. No player may hand the ball forward except during a scrimmage down as follows:

- a. A Team A back may hand the ball forward to another back only if both are behind their scrimmage line and the player handing the ball forward has not had their entire body beyond the neutral zone.
- b. A Team A back behind their scrimmage line may hand the ball forward to a teammate who is on their scrimmage line at the snap, provided that teammate leaves their line position by a movement of both feet that faces that player toward their team's end line and is at least two yards behind their scrimmage line when receiving the ball (A.R. 7-1-6-1).

**PENALTY—Five yards from the spot of the foul; also loss of a down if by Team A before team possession changes during a scrimmage down [S35 and S9].**

### **Planned Loose Ball**

ARTICLE 7. A Team A player may not advance a planned loose ball in the vicinity of the snapper.

**PENALTY—Five yards from the previous spot and loss of down [S19 and S9].**

## **SECTION 2. Backward Pass and Fumble**

### **During Live Ball**

ARTICLE 1. A ball carrier may hand or pass the ball backward at any time, except to throw the ball intentionally out of bounds to conserve time.

**PENALTY—Five yards from the spot of the foul; also loss of down if by Team A before team possession changes during a scrimmage down (A.R. 3-4-3-III) [S35 and S9].**

## Caught or Recovered

ARTICLE 2. a. When a backward pass or fumble is caught or recovered by any inbounds player, the ball continues in play (A.R. 2-23-1-I).

### *Exceptions:*

1. Rule 8-3-2-d-5 (Team A fumble on the try).
  2. On fourth down before a change of team possession, when a Team A fumble is caught or recovered by a Team A player other than the fumbler, the ball is dead. If the catch or recovery is beyond the spot of the fumble, the ball is returned to the spot of the fumble. If the catch or recovery is behind the spot of the fumble, the ball remains at the spot of the catch or recovery.
- b. When a backward pass or fumble is caught or recovered simultaneously by opposing players, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team last in possession (*Exception:* Rule 7-2-2-a Exceptions).

## After the Ball Is Snapped

ARTICLE 3. No offensive lineman may receive a hand-to-hand snap.

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S19].**

## Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 4. a. *Backward Pass.* When a backward pass goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball belongs to the passing team at the out-of-bounds spot.

- b. *Fumble.* When a fumble goes out of bounds between the goal lines:
1. In advance of the spot of the fumble, the ball belongs to the fumbling team at the spot of the fumble (Rule 3-3-2-e-2).
  2. Behind the spot of the fumble, the ball belongs to the fumbling team at the out-of-bounds spot.
- c. *Behind or Beyond Goal Line.* When a fumble or backward pass goes out of bounds behind or beyond a goal line, it is a safety or touchback depending on impetus and responsibility (Rules 8-5-1, 8-6-1 and 8-7) (A.R. 7-2-4-I, A.R. 8-6-1-I and A.R. 8-7-2-I).

## At Rest

ARTICLE 5. a. *Backward Pass.* When a backward pass comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team at the dead-ball spot.

- b. *Fumble.* When a fumble comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it:
1. In advance of the spot of the fumble, the ball belongs to the fumbling team at the spot of the fumble.
  2. Behind the spot of the fumble, the ball belongs to the fumbling team at the dead ball spot.

## SECTION 3. Forward Pass

### Legal Forward Pass

ARTICLE 1. Team A may make one forward pass during each scrimmage down before team possession changes, provided the pass is thrown from a point in or behind the neutral zone.

### Illegal Forward Pass

ARTICLE 2. A forward pass is illegal if:

- a. It is thrown by a Team A player whose entire body is beyond the neutral zone when the ball is released.
- b. It is thrown by a Team B player.
- c. It is thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
- d. It is the second forward pass during the same down.
- e. It is thrown from in or behind the neutral zone after a ball carrier's entire body and the ball have been beyond the neutral zone.

**PENALTY [a-e]—Five yards from the spot of the foul; also loss of down if by Team A before team possession changes during a scrimmage down (A.R. 3-4-3-IV and A.R. 7-3-2-II) [S35 and S9].**

- f. The passer to conserve time throws the ball directly to the ground (1) after the ball has already touched the ground; or (2) not immediately after controlling the ball.
- g. The passer to conserve time throws the ball forward into an area where there is no eligible Team A receiver (A.R. 7-3-2-II-VII).
- h. The passer to conserve yardage throws the ball forward into an area where there is no eligible Team A receiver (A.R. 7-3-2-I).

*[Exception: It is not a foul if the passer is or has been outside the tackle box and throws the ball so that it crosses or lands beyond the neutral zone or neutral zone extended (Rule 2-19-3) (A.R. 7-3-2-VIII-X). This applies only to the player who controls the snap or the resulting backward pass and does not relinquish possession to another player before throwing the forward pass.]*

**PENALTY [f-h]—Loss of down at the spot of the foul [S36 and S9].**

### Eligibility To Touch Legal Forward Pass

ARTICLE 3. a. Eligibility rules apply during a down when a legal forward pass is thrown.

- b. All Team B players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.
- c. When the ball is snapped, the following Team A players are eligible:
  1. Each lineman who is on the end of their scrimmage line and who is wearing a number other than 50 through 79.
  2. Each back wearing a number other than 50 through 79.
- d. An eligible player loses their eligibility when the player goes out of bounds. (Rule 7-3-4) (A. R. 7-3-9-III)

### Eligibility Lost by Going Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 4. No eligible offensive receiver who goes out of bounds and returns in bounds during a down shall touch a legal forward pass while in the field of

play or end zones or while airborne until it has been touched by an opponent or official (A.R. 7-3-4-I, II and IV). [**Exception:** This does not apply to an originally eligible offensive player who immediately returns inbounds after going out of bounds due to contact by an opponent (A.R. 7-3-4-III)]. If the player touches the pass before returning in bounds, it is an incomplete pass (Rule 7-3-7) and not a foul for illegal touching.

**PENALTY—Loss of down at the previous spot [S16 and S9].**

### Eligibility Gained or Regained

ARTICLE 5. When a Team B player or an official touches a legal forward pass, all players become eligible (A.R. 7-3-5-I).

### Complete Pass

ARTICLE 6. Any forward pass is complete when caught by a player of the passing team who is inbounds, and the ball continues in play unless completed in the opponent's end zone or the pass has been caught simultaneously by opposing players. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players inbounds, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team (Rules 2-4-3 and 2-4-4) (A.R. 2-4-3-III and A.R. 7-3-6-I-VIII).

### Incomplete Pass

ARTICLE 7. a. Any forward pass is incomplete if the ball is out of bounds by rule (Rule 4-2-3) or if it touches the ground when not firmly controlled by a player. It also is incomplete when a player leaves their feet and receives the pass but first lands on or outside a boundary line, unless their progress has been stopped in the field of play or end zone (Rule 4-1-3-p) (A.R. 2-4-3-III and A.R. 7-3-7-I).

- b. When a legal forward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the previous spot.
- c. When an illegal forward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the spot of the pass (**Exception:** If Team B declines the penalty for an illegal pass thrown from the end zone, the ball shall next be put in play at the previous spot.) (A.R. 7-3-7-II-III).

### Illegal Contact and Pass Interference

ARTICLE 8. a. During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone, illegal contact by Team A and Team B players is prohibited from the time the ball is snapped until it is touched by any player or an official (A.R. 7-3-8-II).

- b. Offensive pass interference is contact by a Team A player beyond the neutral zone that interferes with a Team B player during a legal forward pass play in which the forward pass crosses the neutral zone. It is the responsibility of the offensive player to avoid the opponents. It is not offensive pass interference (A.R. 7-3-8-IV, V, X, XV and XVI):
  - 1. When, after the snap, a Team A ineligible player immediately charges and contacts an opponent at a point not more than one yard beyond the neutral zone and maintains the contact for no more than three yards beyond the neutral zone. (A.R. 7-3-10-II)

2. When two or more eligible players are making a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch or bat the pass. Eligible players of either team have equal rights to the ball (A.R. 7-3-8-IX).
3. When the pass is in flight and two or more eligible players are in the area where they might receive or intercept the pass and an offensive player in that area impedes an opponent, and the pass is not catchable.

**PENALTY—15 yards from the previous spot [S33].**

- c. Defensive pass interference is contact beyond the neutral zone by a Team B player whose intent to impede an eligible opponent is obvious and could prevent the opponent the opportunity of receiving a catchable forward pass. When in question, a legal forward pass is catchable. Defensive pass interference occurs only after a legal forward pass is thrown (A. R. 7-3-8-VII, VIII, XI and XII).

It is not defensive pass interference (A.R. 7-3-8-III and 7-3-9-III):

1. When, after the snap, opposing players immediately charge and establish contact with opponents at a point that is within one yard beyond the neutral zone.
2. When two or more eligible players are making a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch or bat the pass. Eligible players of either team have equal rights to the ball (A.R. 7-3-8-IX).
3. When a Team B player legally contacts an opponent before the pass is thrown (A.R. 7-3-8-III and X).
4. When there is contact by a Team B player that otherwise would be pass interference during a down in which a Team A potential kicker, from a scrimmage kick formation, simulates a scrimmage kick by throwing the ball high and deep.

**PENALTY—Team A's ball at the spot of the foul, first down, if the foul occurs fewer than 15 yards beyond the previous spot. If the foul occurs 15 or more yards beyond the previous spot, Team A's ball, first down, 15 yards from the previous spot [S33].**

When the ball is snapped on or inside the Team B 17-yard line and outside the Team B two-yard line, and the spot of the foul is on or inside the two-yard line, the penalty from the previous spot shall place the ball at the two-yard line, first down (A.R. 7-3-8-XIV).

No penalty enforced from outside the two-yard line may place the ball inside the two-yard line (*Exception:* On the Try when the snap is on or inside the three-yard line, Rule 10-2-5-b).

If the previous spot was on or inside the two-yard line, first down halfway between the previous spot and the goal line (Rule 10-2-6 Exception).

**Pass Interference: Summary**

- ARTICLE 9. a. Either Team A or Team B legally may interfere with opponents behind the neutral zone.
- b. Players of either team legally may interfere beyond the neutral zone after the pass has been touched (A.R. 7-3-9-I).

- c. Defensive players legally may contact opponents who have crossed the neutral zone if the opponents are not in a position to receive a catchable forward pass.
  1. Those infractions that occur during a down in which a forward pass crosses the neutral zone are pass interference infractions only if the receiver had the opportunity to receive a catchable forward pass.
  2. Those infractions that occur during a down in which a forward pass does not cross the neutral zone are Rule 9-3-4 infractions and the penalty is enforced from the previous spot.
- d. Pass interference rules apply only during a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone (Rules 2-19-3 and 7-3-8-a, b and c).
- e. Contact by Team B with an eligible receiver involving a personal foul that interferes with the reception of a catchable pass may be ruled either as pass interference or as a personal foul with the 15-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot. Rule 7-3-8 is specific about contact during a pass. However, if the interference involves an act that ordinarily would result in disqualification or ejection, the fouling player is disqualified or ejected from the game.
- f. Physical contact is required to establish interference. (A.R. 7-3-8-I)
- g. Each player has territorial rights, and incidental contact is ruled under “attempt to reach...the pass” in Rule 7-3-8. If opponents who are beyond the line collide while moving toward the pass, a foul by one or both players occurs only if intent to impede the opponent is obvious. It is pass interference only if a catchable forward pass is involved.
- h. Pass interference rules do not apply after the pass has been touched anywhere inbounds by an inbounds player or has touched an official. If an opponent is fouled, the penalty is for the foul and not pass interference (A.R. 7-3-9-I).
- i. After the pass has been touched, any player may execute a legal block during the remaining flight of the pass.
- j. Tackling or grasping a receiver or any other intentional contact before the receiver touches the pass is evidence that the tackler is disregarding the ball and is therefore illegal.
- k. Tackling or running into a receiver when a forward pass obviously is underthrown or overthrown is disregarding the ball and is illegal. This is not pass interference but a violation of Rule 9-1-12-a, which carries a penalty of 15 yards from the previous spot plus a first down. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified or ejected.

### Ineligible Receiver Downfield

ARTICLE 10. No originally ineligible receiver shall be or have been more than three yards beyond the neutral zone until a passer throws a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone. A player is in violation of this rule if any part of their body is beyond the three-yard limit. (**Exception:** If the passer is legally throwing the ball away and the ball lands near or beyond the sideline.) (A.R. 7-3-10-I and -III).

**PENALTY—Five yards from the previous spot [S37].**

**Illegal Touching**

ARTICLE 11. No originally ineligible player while inbounds may intentionally touch a legal forward pass until it has touched an opponent or an official (A.R. 5-2-3-I and A.R. 7-3-11-I-II).

**PENALTY—Five yards from the previous spot, loss of down [S16 and S9].**

**Team B Personal Foul and Unsportsmanlike Conduct During Legal Forward Pass Play**

ARTICLE 12. Penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct by Team B during a completed legal forward pass play are enforced at the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone. If the pass is incomplete or intercepted, or if there is a change of team possession during the down, the penalty is enforced at the previous spot. (Rule 9-1 Penalty) (A. R. 7-3-12-I and 9-1-2-III)

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# RULE 8

## Scoring

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### SECTION 1. Value of Scores

#### Scoring Plays

ARTICLE 1. The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown — 6 Points

Field Goal — 3 Points

Safety (points awarded to opponent) — 2 Points

Successful Try:

Touchdown — 2 Points

Field Goal or Safety — 1 Point

#### Forfeited Games

ARTICLE 2. The score of a forfeited game, or a suspended game that later results in a forfeiture, shall be: Offended Team—1, Opponent—0. However, if the offended team is ahead at the time of forfeit, the score stands (Rules 3-3-3-a and b, and Rules 9-2-3).

### SECTION 2. Touchdown

#### How Scored

ARTICLE 1. A touchdown shall be scored when:

- a. A ball carrier advancing from the field of play has possession of a live ball when it penetrates the plane of the opponent's goal line. This plane extends beyond the pylons only for a player who touches the ground in the end zone or a pylon. (A.R. 2-23-1-I and A.R. 8-2-1-I-IX).
- b. A player catches a forward pass in the opponent's end zone (A.R. 5-1-3-I and II).
- c. A fumble or backward pass is recovered, caught, intercepted or awarded in the opponent's end zone (**Exceptions:** Rules 7-2-2-a Exception 2, 7-2-5-b and 8-3-2-d-5). (A.R. 8-2-1-X)
- d. A free kick or scrimmage kick is legally caught or recovered in the opponent's end zone. (A.R. 6-3-9-III).
- e. The referee awards a touchdown under the provisions of Rule 9-2-3 Penalty.

### SECTION 3. Try Down

#### How Scored

ARTICLE 1. If the try results in what would be a touchdown, safety or field goal under rules governing play at other times, the point or points shall be scored according to the point values in Rule 8-1-1 (A.R. 8-3-1-I-II; A.R. 8-3-2-I-III and VI; and A.R. 10-2-5-X-XV).



### Opportunity to Score

ARTICLE 2. A try is an opportunity for either team to score one or two points while the game clock is stopped after a touchdown. It is a special interval in the game which, for purposes of penalty enforcement only, includes both a down and the “ready” period that precedes it.

- a. The ball shall be put in play by the team that scored a six-point touchdown. If a touchdown is scored during a down in which time in the fourth period expires, the try shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game. (**Exception:** If the scoring team is ahead by one or two points, they have the option to forego the try.)
- b. The try, which is a scrimmage down, begins when the ball is ready for play.
- c. The snap will be midway between the hash marks on the opponent’s three-yard line or from any other point on or between the hash marks on or behind the opponent’s three-yard line if the position of the ball is selected by the team designated to put the ball in play before the play clock is at 25 seconds or before any subsequent ready-for-play signal. The ball may be relocated after a Team B foul or a charged timeout to either team, unless the timeout is preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls (Rules 8-3-3-a and 8-3-3-c-1).
- d. The try ends when:
  1. Either team scores.
  2. The ball is dead by rule (A.R. 8-3-2-IV and VI).
  3. An accepted penalty results in a score.
  4. A Team A loss-of-down penalty is accepted (Rule 8-3-3-c-2).
  5. Before a change of team possession, a Team A player fumbles and the ball is caught or recovered by any Team A player other than the fumbler. There is no Team A score (A.R. 8-3-2-VIII).

### Fouls During a Try Before a Change of Team Possession

ARTICLE 3. a. Offsetting fouls: If both teams foul during the down and Team B fouls before the change of possession, the fouls offset and the down is repeated, even if additional fouls occur after the change of possession. Any repeat of the down after offsetting fouls must be from the previous spot (A.R. 8-3-3-II).

- b. *Fouls by Team B on a try:*
  1. When the try is successful Team A shall have the option of declining the score and repeating the try after enforcement, or declining the penalty(ies) and accepting the score. Team A may accept the score with penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls enforced on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods (A.R. 3-2-3-VI; A.R. 8-3-2-II; A.R. 8-3-3-I; and A.R. 10-2-5-IX-XI).
  2. A repeat of the down after a penalty against Team B may be from any point on or between the hash marks on or behind the yard line where the penalty leaves the ball. (A.R. 8-3-3-III)
- c. *Fouls by Team A on a try:*
  1. After a foul by Team A on a successful try, the ball shall be put in play at the spot where the penalty leaves it (A.R. 8-3-3-I).

2. If Team A commits a foul for which the penalty includes loss of down, the try is over, and the score is canceled, and no yardage penalty is assessed on the succeeding kickoff.
  3. If before a change of team possession Team A commits a foul that is not offset, and during the down there is neither another change of team possession nor a score, the penalty is declined by rule.
- d. Dead-ball enforcement:
1. Penalties for fouls occurring after the ball is ready for play and before the snap are enforced before the next snap.
  2. Penalties for live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls occurring during the try down are enforced on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods. If the try is replayed, these penalties are enforced on the replay (Rule 10-1-6) (A.R. 3-2-3-VII).
- e. Roughing or running into kicker or holder: Roughing or running into the kicker or holder is a live-ball foul.
- f. Kick-catch interference: The penalty for interference with a kick catch is declined by rule. Any score by Team A is canceled.

### **Fouls During a Try After a Change of Team Possession**

ARTICLE 4. a. Penalties against either team are declined by rule. (**Exception:** Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, dead-ball personal fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. See Rule 8-3-5.) (A.R. 8-3-4-I and II)

- b. A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled. (**Exception:** Live-ball foul treated as a dead-ball foul.) (A.R. 8-3-2-VII)
- c. If both teams foul during the down and Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls cancel, the down is not repeated, and the try is over. (**Exception:** Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, dead-ball personal fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. See Rule 8-3-5.)

### **Fouls After a Try**

ARTICLE 5. Penalties for fouls occurring after a try are enforced on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods. However, if the try is repeated, these penalties are enforced before the repeat (Rule 10-1-6) (A.R. 10-2-5-XIII-XV and A.R. 3-2-3-VII).

### **Next Play**

ARTICLE 6. After a try, the ball shall be put in play by a kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. The team scoring the six-point touchdown shall kick off.

## **SECTION 4. Field Goal**

### **How Scored**

ARTICLE 1. a. A field goal shall be scored if a scrimmage kick, which may be a drop kick or place kick, passes over the crossbar between the uprights of

the receiving team's goal before it touches a player of the kicking team or the ground.

- b. If a legal field goal attempt passes over the crossbar between the uprights and is dead beyond the end line or is blown back but does not return over the crossbar and is dead anywhere, it shall score a field goal. The crossbar and uprights are treated as a line, not a plane, in determining forward progress of the ball.

### Next Play

ARTICLE 2. a. *Successful field goal.* After a field goal is scored, the ball shall be put in play by a kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. The team scoring the field goal shall kick off.

b. *Unsuccessful field-goal attempt.*

1. If the ball untouched by Team B after crossing the neutral zone is declared dead, it belongs to Team B. Except in an extra period Team B will snap the ball at the previous spot unless the previous spot was between its 20-yard line and its goal line. In that case Team B will next snap the ball at its 20-yard line.
  - (a) The 20-yard-line snap shall be from midway between the hash marks unless Team B selects a different location on or between the hash marks before the ready-for-play signal.
  - (b) After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated after a charged team timeout, unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls.
2. If the ball does not cross the neutral zone, or if Team B touches the ball after it crosses the neutral zone, all rules pertaining to scrimmage kicks apply (A.R. 6-3-4-II, A.R. 8-4-2-I-VI and A.R. 10-2-3-V).
3. If the ball crosses the neutral zone, is untouched by Team B after crossing the neutral zone, and is declared dead behind the neutral zone, all rules pertaining to scrimmage kicks apply (A.R. 8-4-2-VII).

## SECTION 5. Safety

### How Scored

ARTICLE 1. It is a safety when:

- a. The ball becomes dead out of bounds behind a goal line, except from an incomplete forward pass, or becomes dead in the possession of a player on, above or behind their own goal line, or becomes dead by rule, and the defending team is responsible for the ball being there (A.R. 6-3-1-IV; A.R. 7-2-4-I; A.R. 8-5-1-I-II, IV and VI-X; A.R. 8-7-2-II; and A.R. 9-4-1-VIII).

When in question, it is a touchback, not a safety.

#### **Exception:**

It is not a safety if a player between their own team's five-yard line and goal line:

- (a) intercepts a pass or fumble; or recovers an opponent's fumble or backward pass; or catches or recovers a kick; and
- (b) the player's original momentum carries that player into their own end zone; and

- (c) the ball remains behind that team's goal line and is declared dead in that team's possession there. This includes a fumble that goes from the end zone into the field of play and out of bounds (Rule 7-2-4-b-1).

If conditions (a)-(c) are satisfied above, the ball belongs to this player's team at the spot where that player gained possession.

- b. An accepted penalty for a foul leaves the ball on or behind the offending team's goal line (**Exception:** Rules 3-1-3-g-3 and 8-3-4-a) (A.R. 8-5-1-III and A.R. 10-2-2-VI).

### **Kick After Safety**

ARTICLE 2. After a safety is scored, the ball belongs to the defending team at its own 20-yard line, and that team shall put the ball in play on or between the hash marks by a free kick that may be a punt, drop kick or place kick (**Exception:** Extra-period and try rules).

## **SECTION 6. Touchback**

### **When Declared**

ARTICLE 1. It is a touchback when:

- a. The ball becomes dead out of bounds behind a goal line, except from an incomplete forward pass, or becomes dead in the possession of a player on, above or behind their own goal line and the attacking team is responsible for the ball being there (Rules 7-2-4-c) (A.R. 7-2-4-I, A.R. 8-6-1-I-III).
- b. A kick becomes dead by rule behind the defending team's goal line and the attacking team is responsible for the ball being there (**Exception:** Rule 8-4-2-b) (A.R. 6-3-4-III).

### **Snap After a Touchback**

ARTICLE 2. After a touchback is declared, the ball belongs to the defending team at its own 20-yard line, unless the touchback results from a free kick, in which case the ball belongs to Team B at its 25-yard line. The ball shall be put in play on or between the hash marks by a snap (**Exception:** Extra-period rules). The snap shall be from midway between the hash marks, unless a different position on or between the hash marks is selected by the team designated to put the ball in play before the play clock is at 25 seconds or before any subsequent ready-for-play signal. After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated after a charged team timeout, unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls.

## **SECTION 7. Responsibility and Impetus**

### **Responsibility**

ARTICLE 1. The team responsible for the ball being out of bounds behind a goal line or being dead in the possession of a player on, above or behind a goal line is the team whose player carries the ball or imparts an impetus to it that forces it on, above or across the goal line, or is responsible for a loose ball being on, above or behind the goal line.

**Initial Impetus**

ARTICLE 2. a. The impetus imparted by a player who kicks, passes, snaps or fumbles the ball shall be considered responsible for the ball's progress in any direction even though its course is deflected or reversed after striking the ground or after touching an official or a player of either team (A.R. 6-3-4-III; A.R. 8-5-1-II, VI and VIII; and A.R. 8-7-2-I-IV).

- b. Initial impetus is considered expended and the responsibility for the ball's progress is charged to a player:
  - 1. If that player kicks a ball not in player possession or bats a loose ball after it strikes the ground
  - 2. If the ball comes to rest and that player gives it new impetus by any contact with it, other than through forced touching (Rule 2-11-4-c).
- c. A loose ball retains its original status when there is new impetus.

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# RULE 9

## Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules

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### SECTION 1. Personal Fouls

All fouls in this section (unless noted) and any other acts of unnecessary roughness are personal fouls. For flagrant personal fouls mandating conference review, see Rule 9-6. Except as otherwise noted, the penalties for all personal fouls are as follows:

**PENALTY—Personal foul. 15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Penalties for Team A live-ball personal fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the live-ball foul occurs behind Team A's goal line [S7, S24, S25, S26, S28, S34, S38, S39, S40, S41, S45 or S46]. Flagrant offenders shall be ejected or disqualified [S47].**

**For Team A fouls during free or scrimmage kick plays: Enforcement may be at the previous spot or, if the scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone, the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (field-goal plays exempted) (Rules 6-1-8 and 6-3-13).**

**For Team B personal fouls during a legal forward pass play (Rules 7-3-12 and 10-2-2-e): Enforcement is at the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down. If the pass is incomplete or intercepted, or if there is a change of team possession during the down, the penalty is enforced at the previous spot.**

### Flagrant Fouls

ARTICLE 1. Before the game, during the game and between periods, all flagrant fouls (Rule 2-10-3) require ejection or disqualification. Team B flagrant personal fouls require first downs if not in conflict with other rules.

### Striking Fouls and Tripping

ARTICLE 2. a. No person subject to the rules shall strike an opponent with the knee; strike an opponent's helmet (including the face mask), neck, face or any

- other part of the body with an extended forearm, elbow, locked , palm, fist, or the heel, back or side of the open hand; or gouge an opponent (A.R. 9-1-2-I).
- b. No person subject to the rules shall strike an opponent with their foot or any part of their leg that is below the knee.
  - c. There shall be no tripping. Tripping is intentionally using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knee. (Rule 2-28)

### **Targeting and Making Forcible Contact With the Crown of the Helmet**

ARTICLE 3. No player shall target and make forcible contact against an opponent with the crown of their helmet. The crown of the helmet is the top segment of the helmet; namely, the circular area defined by a 6-inch radius from the apex (top) of the helmet. This foul requires that there be at least one indicator of targeting (See *Note 1* below). When in question, it is a foul. (Rule 9-6) (A.R. 9-1-3-I)

### **Targeting and Making Forcible Contact to Head or Neck Area of a Defenseless Player**

ARTICLE 4. No player shall target and make forcible contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless opponent (See *Note 2* below) with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulder. This foul requires that there be at least one indicator of targeting (See *Note 1* below). When in question, it is a foul (Rules 2-27-14 and 9-6). (A.R. 9-1-4-I-VI)

**Note 1:** “Targeting” means that a player takes aim at an opponent for purposes of attacking with forcible contact that goes beyond making a legal tackle or a legal block or playing the ball. Some *indicators of targeting* include but are not limited to:

- Launch. A player leaving their feet to attack an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body to make forcible contact in the head or neck area.
- A crouch followed by an upward and forward thrust to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area, even though one or both feet are still on the ground.
- Leading with helmet, shoulder, forearm, fist, hand or elbow to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area.
- Lowering the head before attacking by initiating forcible contact with the crown of the helmet.

**Note 2:** Defenseless player (Rule 2-27-14). When in question, a player is defenseless. *Examples of defenseless players include but are not limited to:*

- A player in the act of or just after throwing a pass. This includes an offensive player in a passing posture with focus downfield.
- A receiver attempting to catch a forward pass or in position to receive a backward pass, or one who has completed a catch and has not had time to protect themselves or has not clearly become a ball carrier.
- A kicker in the act of or just after kicking a ball, or during the kick or the return.
- A kick returner attempting to catch or recover a kick, or one who has completed a catch or recovery and has not had time to protect themselves or has not clearly become a ball carrier.

- A player on the ground.
- A player obviously out of the play.
- A player who receives a blind-side block.
- A ball carrier already in the grasp of an opponent and whose forward progress has been stopped.
- A quarterback any time after a change of possession
- A ball carrier who has obviously given themselves up and is sliding feet-first.

**PENALTY**—[ARTICLE 3 and ARTICLE 4]—15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. For fouls in the first half: Disqualification for the remainder of the game. (Rule 2-27-12) For fouls in the second half: Disqualification for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game. If the foul occurs in the second half of the last game of the season, players with remaining eligibility shall serve the suspension during the postseason or the first game of the following season.

If a player receives a third Targeting foul within the same season, disqualification for the remainder of the game and that player will receive an automatic one-game suspension in their team's next scheduled game. Targeting fouls subsequent to the player's third Targeting foul within the same season, disqualification for the remainder of that game and the player will receive an automatic one-game suspension in their team's next scheduled game. If the foul occurs in the last game of the season, players with remaining eligibility shall serve the suspension during the postseason or the first game of the following season.

The disqualification must be reviewed by Instant Replay (Rule 12-3-5). [S38, S24 and S47]

When the Instant Replay Official overturns the disqualification:

If the targeting foul is not in conjunction with another personal foul by the same player, the 15-yard penalty for targeting is not enforced. If the player commits another personal foul in conjunction with the targeting foul, the 15-yard penalty for that personal foul is enforced according to rule. (A. R. 9-1-4-VII-VIII)

**For games in which Instant Replay is used:**

If a player is disqualified in the second half, the conference has the option to consult the national coordinator of football officials who would then facilitate a video review. Based on the review, if and only if the national coordinator concludes that it is clearly obvious the player should not have been disqualified, the conference may vacate the suspension. If the national coordinator supports the disqualification, the suspension for the next game will remain.



**For games in which Instant Replay is not used:**

If a player is disqualified in the first half, at the option of the conference or by pre-game mutual agreement of the teams in inter-conference games, during the intermission between halves the Referee will be provided a video of the play in question for their review in the officials' private secure location. The Referee will review the video to determine whether the disqualification is overturned. The decision of the Referee is final. (A. R. 9-1-4-IX)

*Note:* The video source and the location of the review will be determined prior to the game through mutual agreement of the teams and the Referee.

If a player is disqualified in the second half, the conference has the option to consult the national coordinator of football officials who would then facilitate a video review. Based on the review, if and only if the national coordinator concludes that the player should not have been disqualified, the conference may vacate the suspension. If the national coordinator supports the disqualification, the suspension for the next game will remain.

**Clipping**

ARTICLE 5. There shall be no clipping (Rule 2-5).

***Exceptions:***

1. Offensive players who are on the line of scrimmage at the snap within the blocking zone (Rule 2-3-6) legally may clip in the blocking zone, subject to the following restrictions:
  - (a) A player in the blocking zone may not block an opponent with the force of the initial contact from behind and at or below the knee.
  - (b) A player on the line of scrimmage within the blocking zone may not leave the zone and return and legally clip.
  - (c) No player may violate Rule 9-1-6 (Blocking Below the Waist).

*Note:* The blocking zone disintegrates when the ball leaves the zone (Rule 2-3-6).
2. When a player turns their back to a potential blocker who has committed themselves in intent and direction or movement.
3. When a player attempts to reach a runner or attempts to legally recover or catch a fumble, a backward pass, a kick or a touched forward pass, that player may push an opponent below the waist at or to the buttocks (Rule 9-3-5, Exception 3).
4. When an eligible player behind the neutral zone pushes an opponent below the waist at or to the buttocks to get to a forward pass (Rule 9-3-5, Exception 5).
5. Clipping is allowed against the runner.

**Blocking Below the Waist**

ARTICLE 6. a. *Team A prior to a change of team possession:*

1. Linemen with initial position completely inside the tackle box may legally block below the waist inside the tackle box on their initial line charge. A block initiated 1-yard beyond the neutral zone is considered

within the tackle box. After the initial line charge, these linemen may block below the waist within the tackle box until the ball leaves the tackle box only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front.

2. Stationary Backs lined up within the tackle box may block below the waist within the tackle box until the ball leaves the tackle box only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front.

“Directed from the front” is defined as within the clock face region between “10 o’clock and 2 o’clock” forward of the area of concentration of the player being blocked.

3. All other Team A players are not allowed to block below the waist.

b. *Team B prior to a change of team possession:*

1. Players aligned in a stationary position within 1-yard of the line of scrimmage within the tackle box may legally block below the waist in the tackle box on their initial line charge.

2. All other Team B players are not allowed to block below the waist except against a ball carrier.

c. *Kicks.* During a down in which there is a free kick or scrimmage kick, blocking below the waist by any player is illegal except against a ball carrier.

d. *After change of team possession.* After any change of team possession, blocking below the waist by any player is illegal except against a ball carrier.

e. *Clipping.* No player may violate Rule 9-1-5 (Clipping).

### Late Hit, Action Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 7. a. There shall be no piling on, falling on or throwing the body on an opponent after the ball becomes dead (A.R. 9-1-7-I).

b. No opponent shall tackle or block the runner when the runner is clearly out of bounds or throw the runner to the ground after the ball becomes dead.

c. It is illegal for any player to be clearly out of bounds when initiating a block against an opponent who is out of bounds. The spot of the foul is where the blocker crosses the sideline in going out of bounds.

### Helmet and Face Mask Fouls

ARTICLE 8. a. No player shall continuously contact an opponent’s face, helmet (including the face mask) or neck with hand(s) or arm(s) (*Exception:* By or against the runner). [S26]

b. No player shall grasp and then twist, turn or pull the face mask, chin strap or any helmet opening of an opponent. It is not a foul if the face mask, chin strap or helmet opening is not grasped and then twisted, turned or pulled. When in question, it is a foul.

### Roughing the Passer

ARTICLE 9. a. No defensive player shall unnecessarily rough a passer, when it is obvious the ball has been thrown. The following actions are illegal, but not limited to:

1. Targeting fouls as noted in Rules 9-1-3 and 9-1-4.
2. Forcible contact to the head or neck area that does not meet the requirements of Rule 9-1-4 (also reference Rule 9-1-2).

3. Forcible contact that is avoidable after it is obvious the ball has left the passer's hand. (**Exception:** A defensive player who is blocked by a Team A player[s] with a force so that they have no opportunity to avoid contact with the passer. However, this does not relieve the defensive player of responsibility for personal fouls as described in elsewhere in this section.)
  4. Forcibly driving the passer to the ground and landing on the passer with action that punishes the player.
  5. Any action that is a personal foul as described elsewhere in this section.
- b. When an offensive player is in a passing posture with one or both feet on the ground, no defensive player rushing unabated shall hit the player forcibly at the knee area or below. The defensive player also may not initiate a roll or lunge and forcibly hit this opponent in the knee area or below. (**Exceptions:** (1) It is not a foul if the offensive player is a runner not in a passing posture, either inside or outside the tackle box. (2) It is not a foul if the defender grabs or wraps this opponent in an attempt to make a conventional tackle without making forcible contact with the head or shoulder. (3) It is not a foul if the defender is not rushing unabated or is blocked or fouled into this opponent.]

For paragraphs a and b, the penalty is added to the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down. (A.R. 9-1-9-II-III)

### Chop Blocking

ARTICLE 10. There shall be no chop blocking (Rule 2-3-3) (A.R. 9-1-10-I-V).

### Leverage and Leaping

ARTICLE 11. a. No defensive player, in an attempt to gain an advantage, may step, jump or stand on an opponent.

- b. It is a foul if a defensive player moves forward and tries to block a kick or apparent kick on a field goal or try by leaving their feet and leaping into the plane directly above the frame of the body of an opponent.  
It is not a foul if the player was aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped.
- c. It is a foul if a defensive player who is inside the tackle box tries to block a punt or an apparent punt by leaving their feet and leaping into the plane directly above the frame of the body of an opponent.
  1. It is not a foul if the player tries to block the punt by jumping straight up without attempting to leap over the opponent.
  2. It is not a foul if a player leaps through or over the gap between players.
- d. No defensive player, in an attempt to block, bat or catch a kick or apparent kick, may:
  1. Step, jump or stand on a teammate.
  2. Place a hand(s) on a teammate to get leverage for additional height.
  3. Be picked up by a teammate, or be elevated, propelled or pushed.

**PENALTY [a-d]—15 yards, previous spot and automatic first down. [S38]**

- e. No player may position themselves with their feet on the back or shoulders of a teammate before the snap.

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules [S27].**

### **Contact Against an Opponent Out of the Play**

ARTICLE 12. a. No player shall tackle or run into a receiver when a forward pass to that receiver is obviously not catchable. This is a personal foul and not pass interference.

b. No player shall run into or throw themselves against an opponent obviously out of the play either before or after the ball is dead.

### **Hurdling**

ARTICLE 13. There shall be no hurdling (*Exception:* The ball carrier may hurdle an opponent).

### **Contact Against the Snapper**

ARTICLE 14. When a team is in scrimmage kick formation, a defensive player may not initiate contact with the snapper until one second has elapsed after the snap (A.R. 9-1-14-I-III).

### **Horse-Collar Tackle**

ARTICLE 15. All players are prohibited from grabbing the inside back collar of the shoulder pads or jersey, the nameplate area, or the inside collar of the side of the shoulder pads or jersey, and abruptly pulling the ball carrier down. This does not apply to a ball carrier, including a potential passer, who is inside the tackle box (Rule 2-34). Note that the tackle box disintegrates when the ball leaves it.

### **Roughing or Running Into Kicker or Holder**

ARTICLE 16. a. When it is obvious that a scrimmage kick will be made, no opponent shall run into or rough the kicker or the holder of a place kick (A.R. 9-1-16-I, III and VI).

1. Roughing is a live-ball personal foul that endangers the kicker or holder.
2. Running into the kicker or holder is a live-ball foul that occurs when the kicker or holder is displaced from their kicking or holding position but is not roughed (A.R. 9-1-16-II).
3. Incidental contact with a kicker or holder is not a foul.
4. The kicker's protection under this rule ends (a) when the kicker has had a reasonable time to regain their balance (A.R. 9-1-16-IV); or (b) when the kicker carries or possesses the ball outside the tackle box (Rule 2-34) before kicking.
5. When a defensive player's contact against the kicker or holder is caused by an opponent's block (legal or illegal), there is no foul for running into or roughing.
6. A player who makes contact with the kicker or holder after touching the kick is not charged with running into or roughing the kicker.
7. When a player other than one who blocks a scrimmage kick runs into or roughs the kicker or holder, it is a foul.
8. When in question whether the foul is *running into* or *roughing*, the foul is *roughing*.

**PENALTY—Roughing or any other personal foul against the kicker who is in the act or just after kicking the ball; or roughing the holder: 15 yards from the previous spot, plus automatic first down if not in conflict with other rules [S38 and S30]. Running into the kicker or holder: 5 yards from the previous spot [S30].**

- b. A kicker or holder simulating being roughed or run into by a defensive player commits an unsportsmanlike act (A.R. 9-1-16-V).

**PENALTY—15 yards from the previous spot or, if the scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone, can be enforced where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B [S27].**

- c. The kicker of a free kick may not be blocked until they have advanced five yards beyond their restraining line, or until the ball has touched a player, an official or the ground.

**PENALTY—15 yards from the previous spot [S40].**

### **Continued Participation Without Helmet**

ARTICLE 17. A player whose helmet comes completely off during a down may not continue to participate beyond the immediate action in which they are engaged, whether or not the player puts the helmet back on during the down. (A.R. 9-1-17-1)

### **Blind-Side Block**

ARTICLE 18. No player shall deliver a blind-side block by attacking an opponent with forcible contact. (*Exceptions:* (1) the runner; (2) a receiver in the act of attempting to make a catch.) (*Note:* *In addition, if this action meets all the elements of targeting, it is a blind-slide block with targeting (Rule 9-1-3 and 9-1-4).*) (A.R. 9-1-18-1)

## **SECTION 2. Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls**

### **Unsportsmanlike Acts**

ARTICLE 1. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct or any act that interferes with orderly game administration on the part of players, substitutes, coaches, authorized attendants or any other persons subject to the rules, before the game, during the game or between periods. Infractions for these acts by players are administered as either live-ball or dead-ball fouls depending on when they occur. (A.R. 9-2-1-I-X)

- a. Specifically prohibited acts and conduct include:
  - 1. No player, substitute, coach or other person subject to the rules shall use abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning to an opponent, to game officials or to the image of the game, including but not limited to:
    - (a) Pointing the finger(s), hand(s), arm(s) or ball at an opponent, or imitating the slashing of the throat.
    - (b) Taunting, baiting or ridiculing an opponent verbally.
    - (c) Inciting an opponent or spectators in any other way, such as simulating the firing of a weapon or placing a hand by the ear to request recognition.

- (d) Any delayed, excessive, prolonged or choreographed act by which a player (or players) attempts to focus attention upon themselves (or themselves).
- (e) An unopposed ball carrier obviously altering stride when approaching the opponent's goal line or diving into the end zone.
- (f) A player removing their helmet after the ball is dead and before they are in the team area (**Exceptions:** Team, media or injury timeouts; equipment adjustment; through play; between periods; and during a measurement for a first down).
- (g) Punching one's own chest or crossing one's arms in front of the chest while standing over a prone player.
- (h) Going into the stands to interact with spectators, or bowing at the waist after a good play.
- (i) Intentionally removing the helmet while the ball is alive.
- (j) Dead-ball contact fouls such as pushing, shoving, striking, etc. that occur clearly after the ball is dead and that are not part of the game action. (A.R. 9-2-1-X)
- (k) After the ball is dead, using forcible contact to push or pull an opponent off the pile. (A.R. 9-2-1-XI)

**PENALTY—Unsportsmanlike conduct. Live-ball fouls by players: 15 yards [S27]. Live-ball fouls by non-players and all dead-ball fouls: 15 yards from succeeding spot [S7 and S27]. Automatic first down for live-ball and dead-ball fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be ejected [S47].**

**For Team A fouls during free or scrimmage kick plays: Enforcement may be at the previous spot or, if the scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone, the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (field-goal plays exempted) (Rules 6-1-8 and 6-3-13).**

**For Team B unsportsmanlike conduct fouls during a legal forward pass play (Rules 7-3-12 and 10-2-2-e): Enforcement is at the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down. If the pass is incomplete or intercepted, or if there is a change of team possession during the down, the penalty is enforced at the previous spot.**

2. After a score or any other play, the player in possession immediately must return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot. This prohibits:
  - (a) Kicking, throwing, spinning or carrying (including off of the field) the ball any distance that requires an official to retrieve it.
  - (b) Spiking the ball to the ground [**Exception:** A forward pass to conserve time (Rule 7-3-2-f)].
  - (c) Throwing the ball high into the air.
  - (d) Any other unsportsmanlike act or actions that delay the game.

**PENALTY—Unsportsmanlike conduct. Dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S27]. Automatic first down for**

**fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be ejected [S47].**

- b. Other prohibited acts include:
1. During the game, coaches, squad members, and authorized attendants in the team area may not be on the field of play or outside the 20-yard lines to protest an officiating decision or to communicate with players or officials without permission from the referee. (**Exceptions:** Rules 1-2-4-f, 3-3-4-d, 3-3-8-c, and 3-5-1).
  2. No ejected person shall be in view of the field of play (Rule 9-2-6).
  3. No person or mascot subject to the rules, except players, officials and eligible substitutes, shall be on the field of play or end zones during any period without permission from the referee. If a player is injured, attendants may come inbounds to attend him, but they must obtain recognition from an official.
  4. No substitute(s) may enter the field of play or end zones for purposes other than replacing a player(s) or to fill a player vacancy(ies). This includes demonstrations after any play (A.R. 9-2-1-I).
  5. Persons subject to the rules, including bands and audio/video/lighting systems operators, shall not create any noise or distraction that prohibits a team from hearing its signals or obstructs play (Rule 1-1-6).

**PENALTY [1-4]—Unsportsmanlike conduct. Dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S27]. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be ejected [S47].**

**PENALTY [5]—Unsportsmanlike conduct. The referee may take any action they consider equitable, which includes directing that the down be repeated, including assessing a 15-yard penalty, awarding a score, or suspending or forfeiting the game [S27].**

### **Unfair Tactics**

ARTICLE 2. a. No player shall conceal the ball in or beneath their clothing or equipment or substitute any other article for the ball.

- b. No simulated replacements or substitutions may be used to confuse opponents. No tactic associated with substitutes or the substitution process may be used to confuse opponents (Rule 3-5-2-e) (A.R. 9-2-2-I-VI).
- c. No equipment may be used to confuse opponents (Rule 1-4-2-d).
- d. Two players playing the same position may not wear the same number during the game.

**PENALTY [a-d]—Unsportsmanlike conduct. Live-ball foul. 15 yards from the previous spot [S27]. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant offenders shall be ejected [S47].**

- e. No more than two Squad Members may be assigned or wear the same jersey number.

**PENALTY—Unsportsmanlike Conduct charged against the Head Coach and the players must immediately correct the numbering and report the change. Administer as a dead ball foul - 15 yards [S27].**

f. No player may play with cleats more than 1/2-inch in length (Rules 1-4-7-d).

**PENALTY—Ejection for the remainder of the game and the team's next game [S27 and S47]. Administer as a dead-ball foul; 15-yard penalty enforced at the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Team timeout. VIOLATION—Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b [S23, S3 or S21]. If the ejection occurs during the last game of a season, players with eligibility remaining will serve the next-game ejection during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

g. The referee will notify (in writing) their assigning agent of all ejections for illegal cleats. The assigning agency becomes responsible for implementation of the penalty.

### **Unfair Acts**

ARTICLE 3. The following are unfair acts:

- a. A team refuses to play within two minutes after ordered to do so by the referee.
- b. A team repeatedly commits fouls for which penalties can be enforced only by halving the distance to its goal line.
- c. An obviously unfair act not specifically covered by the rules occurs during the game. This includes substitutes, coaches or any other persons subject to the rules, other than a player or official, interfering in any way with the ball or a player while the ball is in play (A.R. 4-2-1-II, 9-2-3-I and 9-2-3-IV).

**PENALTY— Unsportsmanlike conduct. The referee may take any action they consider equitable, which includes directing that the down be repeated, including assessing a 15-yard penalty, awarding a score, or suspending or forfeiting the game [S27].**

### **Contacting an Official**

ARTICLE 4. Persons subject to the rules (Rule 1-1-6) shall not intentionally contact a game official forcibly during the game.

**PENALTY— Unsportsmanlike conduct. Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot and automatic ejection. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. [S7, S27 and S47].**

### **Game Administration and Sideline Interference**

ARTICLE 5. While the ball is alive and during the continuing action after the ball has been declared dead:

- a. Coaches, substitutes and authorized attendants in the team area must be behind the coaching line.

**PENALTY—Administer as a dead-ball foul. First infraction: Warning for sideline interference. No yardage penalty. [S15]**

**Second and third infractions: Delay of game for sideline interference, five yards from the succeeding spot. [S21 and S29]**

**Fourth and subsequent infractions: Team unsportsmanlike conduct for sideline interference, 15 yards from the succeeding**



**spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. [S27 and S29]**

- b. Physical interference with an official is a foul charged to the team for unsportsmanlike conduct. (A.R. 9-2-5-1)

**PENALTY—Team unsportsmanlike conduct. Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules.[S27]**

### **Ejected Players and Coaches**

ARTICLE 6. a. Any coach, player or identified squad member in uniform who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game shall be ejected.

- b. A player ejected from the game (Rule 2-27-12) must leave the playing enclosure under team supervision within a reasonable amount of time after their ejection. The player must remain out of view of the field of play under team supervision for the remainder of the game.
- c. A player serving a first-half suspension due to their ejection in the team's previous game may participate in pre-game warm-up activities. During the first half that player must remain out of view of the field of play under team supervision.
- d. A coach ejected from the game must leave the playing enclosure within a reasonable amount of time after the ejection and must remain out of view of the field of play for the remainder of the game.
- e. A head coach ejected from the game may designate a new head coach.

### **Use of Tobacco**

ARTICLE 7. Players, squad members and game personnel (e.g., coaches, athletics trainers, managers and game officials) are prohibited from using tobacco products from the time the officials assume jurisdiction until the referee declares the game over.

**PENALTY—Ejection. Dead-ball foul. 15 yards at the succeeding spot [S27 and S47].**

## **SECTION 3. Blocking, Use of Hands or Arms**

### **Who May Block**

ARTICLE 1. Players of either team may block opponents, provided it is not pass interference, interference with the opportunity to catch a kick or a personal foul (*Exception:* Rules 6-1-12 and 6-5-4).

### **Interfering for or Helping the Ball Carrier or Passer**

ARTICLE 2. a. The ball carrier or passer may use their hand or arm to ward off or push opponents.

- b. The ball carrier shall not grasp a teammate; and no other teammate shall grasp, pull, or lift the ball carrier to assist in forward progress. (A.R. 9-3-2-1)
- c. Teammates of the ball carrier or passer may interfere with opponents by blocking but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner while contacting an opponent.

**PENALTY—Five yards [S44].**

### **Holding and Use of Hands or Arms: Offense**

ARTICLE 3. a. *Use of Hands.* A teammate of a ball carrier or a passer legally may block with their shoulders, their hands, the outer surface of their arms or any other part of their body under the following provisions.

1. The hand(s) shall be:
    - (a) In advance of the elbow.
    - (b) Inside the frame of the opponent's body (**Exception:** When the opponent turns their back to the blocker) (A.R. 9-3-3-VI and VII).
    - (c) At or below the shoulder(s) of the blocker and the opponent (**Exception:** When the opponent squats, ducks or submarines).
    - (d) Apart and never in a locked position.
  2. The hand(s) shall be open with the palm(s) facing the frame of the opponent or closed or cupped with the palms not facing the opponent (A.R. 9-3-3-I-IV and VI-VIII).
- b. *Holding.* The hand(s) and arm(s) shall not be used to grasp, pull, hook, clamp or encircle in any way that illegally impedes or illegally obstructs an opponent.

**PENALTY—10 yards Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line [S42].**

- c. *Kicking Team.* A player on the kicking team may:
  1. During a scrimmage kick play, use their hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off an opponent attempting to block them when they are beyond the neutral zone.
  2. During a free kick play, use their hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off an opponent who is attempting to block them.
  3. During a scrimmage kick play or a free kick play, when they are eligible to touch the ball, legally use their hand(s) and/or arm(s) to push an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball.
- d. *Passing Team.* An eligible player of the passing team legally may use their hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off or push an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball after a legal forward pass has been touched by any player or official (Rules 7-3-5, 7-3-8, 7-3-9 and 7-3-11).

### **Holding and Use of Hands or Arms: Defense**

ARTICLE 4. a. Defensive players may use hands and arms to push, pull, ward off or lift offensive players:

1. When attempting to reach the runner.
  2. Who are obviously attempting to block them.
- b. A defensive player legally may use their hands or arms to ward off or block an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball (Rule 9-1-5, Exceptions 3 and 4 and Rule 9-3-5, Exceptions 3 and 5):
1. During a backward pass, fumble or kick that they are eligible to touch.
  2. During any forward pass that crossed the neutral zone and has been touched by any player or official.
- c. When making no attempt to get at the ball or the runner, defensive players must comply with Article 3, paragraphs *a* and *b* above.

- d. Defensive players may not use hands and arms to tackle, hold or otherwise illegally obstruct an opponent other than a runner.
- e. Defensive players may ward off or legally block an eligible pass receiver until that player occupies the same yard line as the defender or until the opponent could not possibly block him. Continuous contact is illegal (A.R. 9-3-4-I).

**PENALTY [c-e]—10 yards plus automatic first down if the first down is not in conflict with other rules [S42].**

### **Blocking in the Back**

ARTICLE 5. A block in the back (other than against the ball carrier) is illegal (A.R. 9-3-3-I, VII and -IX; and A.R. 10-2-2-XII).

#### ***Exceptions:***

1. Offensive players who are on the line of scrimmage at the snap within the blocking zone (Rule 2-3-6) may legally block in the back in the blocking zone, subject to the following restrictions:
  - (a) A player on the line of scrimmage within this blocking zone may not leave the zone, return and block in the back.
  - (b) The blocking zone disintegrates when the ball leaves the zone (Rule 2-3-6).
2. When a player turns their back to a potential blocker who has committed themselves in intent and direction or movement.
3. When a player attempts to reach a runner or legally attempts to recover or catch a fumble, a backward pass, a kick or a touched forward pass, they may push an opponent in the back above the waist (Rule 9-1-5 Exception 3).
4. When the opponent turns their back to the blocker under Rule 9-3-3-a-1-(b).
5. When an eligible player behind the neutral zone pushes an opponent in the back above the waist to get to a forward pass (Rule 9-1-5 Exception 4).

**PENALTY—10 yards. Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line. [S43].**

## **SECTION 4. Batting and Kicking**

### **Batting a Loose Ball**

- ARTICLE 1. a. While a pass is in flight, only a player who is eligible to touch the ball may bat it in any direction (***Exception:*** Rule 9-4-2).
- b. Any player may block a scrimmage kick in the field of play or the end zone.
  - c. No player shall bat other loose balls forward in the field of play or in any direction if the ball is in the end zone (Rule 2-2-3-a) (***Exception:*** Rule 6-3-11) (A.R. 6-3-11-I, A.R. 9-4-1-I-X and A.R. 10-2-2-II).

**PENALTY—10 yards and loss of down for fouls by Team A if the loss of down is not in conflict with other rules [S31 and S9] [*Exception:* No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick is beyond the neutral zone].**

### **Batting a Backward Pass in Flight**

ARTICLE 2. A backward pass in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team.

**PENALTY—10 yards [S31].**

### **Batting Ball in Possession**

ARTICLE 3. A ball in player possession may not be batted forward by a player of that team.

**PENALTY—10 yards [S31].**

### **Illegally Kicking Ball**

ARTICLE 4. A player shall not kick a loose ball, a forward pass or a ball being held for a place kick by an opponent. These illegal acts do not change the status of the loose ball or forward pass; but if the player holding the ball for a place kick loses possession during a scrimmage down, it is a fumble and a loose ball; if during a free kick, the ball remains dead (A.R. 8-7-2-IV and A. R. 9-4-1-XI).

**PENALTY—10 yards, plus loss of down for fouls by Team A if the loss of down is not in conflict with other rules [S31 and S9] (Exception: No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick is beyond the neutral zone).**

## **SECTION 5. Fighting**

ARTICLE 1. a. Before the game, squad members in uniform or coaches shall not participate in a fight (Rule 2-32-1).

During the first half, players shall not participate in a fight.

**PENALTY—15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules. Ejection for the remainder of the game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47].**

b. During the half-time intermission, squad members in uniform or coaches shall not participate in a fight.

During the second half, players shall not participate in a fight.

**PENALTY—15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules. Ejection for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47]. For fighting in the last game of a season, those with remaining eligibility shall serve suspensions during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

c. During either half, coaches or substitutes shall not leave their team area to participate in a fight, nor shall they participate in a fight in their team area.

**PENALTY—15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules. Ejection for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47]. For fighting in the last game of a season, those with remaining eligibility shall serve suspensions**

**during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

ARTICLE 2. a. If the squad member, coach or player is ejected for fighting a second time during that season, they shall be ejected from that game and suspended for the remainder of the season.

b. If a second fighting suspension occurs in the final game of a season, they shall be suspended for the first game of the next season for which they are eligible. This suspension is considered to be the first fight of that season.

ARTICLE 3. The referee will notify (in writing) their assigning agency of all ejections for fighting. The assigning agency becomes responsible for implementation of the penalty.

## **SECTION 6. Flagrant Personal Fouls**

### **Player Ejection**

ARTICLE 1. When a player is ejected from the game due to a flagrant personal foul (Rule 2-10-3), that team's conference shall automatically initiate a video review for possible additional sanctions before the next scheduled game.

### **Foul Not Called**

ARTICLE 2. If subsequent review of a game by a conference reveals plays involving flagrant personal fouls that game officials did not call, the conference may impose sanctions prior to the next scheduled game.

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# RULE 10

## Penalty Enforcement

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### SECTION 1. Penalties Completed

#### How and When Completed

ARTICLE 1. a. A penalty is completed when it is accepted, declined or canceled according to rule, or when the choice is obvious to the referee.

- b. Any penalty may be declined, but a disqualified or ejected player must leave the game whether the penalty is accepted or declined (Rule 2-27-12).
- c. When a foul is committed, the penalty shall be completed before the ball is declared ready for play for any ensuing down.
- d. Penalties as stated are not enforced if in conflict with other rules.

#### Simultaneous With Snap

ARTICLE 2. A foul that occurs simultaneously with a snap or free kick is considered as occurring during that down (**Exception:** Rule 3-5-2-e).

#### Live-Ball Fouls by the Same Team

ARTICLE 3. When two or more live-ball fouls by the same team are reported to the referee, the offended team may elect only one of these penalties. Any player who commits a foul that mandates disqualification or ejection must leave the game.

#### Offsetting Fouls

ARTICLE 4. If live-ball fouls by both teams are reported to the referee, the fouls offset and the down is repeated (A.R. 10-1-4-I and VII). Any player who commits a foul that mandates disqualification or ejection must leave the game.

##### **Exceptions:**

1. When there is a change of team possession during a down, and the team last gaining possession had not fouled before last gaining possession, it may refuse offsetting fouls and thereby retain possession after completion of the penalty for its foul (A.R. 10-1-4-II-VII).
2. When all Team B fouls that occur before possession changes are governed by postscrimmage kick rules, Team B may refuse offsetting fouls and accept postscrimmage kick enforcement.
3. Rules 8-3-4-c and 3-1-3-g-3 (during a try or extra period after Team B possession).

#### Dead-Ball Fouls

ARTICLE 5. Penalties for dead-ball fouls are administered separately and in order of occurrence (A.R. 10-1-5-I-III) [**Exception:** When dead-ball unsportsmanlike or dead-ball personal fouls by both teams are reported to the

referee and none of the penalties have been completed, the yardage penalties cancel and the number or type of down established before the fouls occurred is unaffected. Any disqualified or ejected player must leave the game (Rules 5-2-6 and 10-2-2-a)].

### Live-Ball—Dead-Ball Fouls

ARTICLE 6. a. Live-ball fouls do not offset dead-ball fouls.

- b. When a live-ball foul by one team is followed by one or more dead-ball fouls (including live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls) by an opponent or by the same team, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence (A.R. 10-1-6-I-VI).

### Interval Fouls

ARTICLE 7. Penalties for fouls that occur between the end of the fourth period and the start of the extra period for overtime, between possession series during an extra period, and between extra periods are enforced from the spot of the next possession series (**Exception:** Rule 10-2-5, A.R. 10-2-5-I-XII).

## SECTION 2. Enforcement Procedures

### Enforcement Spots

ARTICLE 1. a. For many fouls, the enforcement spot is specified in the statement of the penalty. When the enforcement spot is not specified in the statement of the penalty, the enforcement spot is determined by the Three-and-One Principle (Rules 2-33 and 10-2-2-c).

- b. Possible enforcement spots are: the previous spot, the spot of the foul, the succeeding spot, the spot where the run ends, and—for scrimmage kicks only—the postscrimmage kick spot.

### Determining the Enforcement Spot and the Basic Spot

ARTICLE 2. a. Dead-ball fouls. The enforcement spot for a foul committed when the ball is dead is the succeeding spot.

- b. Fouls by the offensive team behind the neutral zone. For the following fouls committed by the offensive team behind the neutral zone, the penalty is enforced at the previous spot: illegal use of hands, holding, illegal block and personal fouls (**Exception:** If the foul occurs in Team A's end zone the penalty is a safety.). However, see Rule 6-3-13 for offensive team fouls during scrimmage kick plays.
- c. The Three-and-One Principle (Rule 2-33) is as follows:
1. When the team in possession commits a foul behind the basic spot, the penalty is enforced at the spot of the foul.
  2. When the team in possession commits a foul beyond the basic spot, the penalty is enforced at the basic spot.
  3. When the team not in possession commits a foul either behind or beyond the basic spot, the penalty is enforced at the basic spot.
- d. The following are basic spots for the various categories of plays:
1. *Running plays.*
    - (a) *Previous spot*, when the related run ends behind the neutral zone.
    - (b) *End of the related run*, when the related run ends beyond the neutral zone.

- (c) *End of the related run*, on running plays that have no neutral zone.
- 2. *Running plays when the run ends in the end zone after change of team possession (not on a try).*
  - (a) *Succeeding spot*, when a foul occurs after a change of team possession in the end zone and the result of the play is a touchback.
  - (b) *Goal line*, when a foul occurs after a change of team possession in the field of play and the related run ends in the end zone. (**Exception:** Rule 8-5-1-Exceptions.)
  - (c) *Goal line*, when a foul occurs after a change of team possession in the end zone, the related run ends in the end zone, and the result of the play is not a touchback.
- 3. *Pass plays.*  
*Previous spot*, on legal forward pass plays.
- 4. *Kick plays.*
  - (a) *Previous spot*, on legal kick plays unless the foul is governed by postscrimmage kick rules.
  - (b) *Postscrimmage kick spot*, if the foul is governed by postscrimmage kick rules.
- e. For Team B fouls during a legal forward pass play: Penalty enforcement for Team B personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct is at the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down. (Rule 7-3-12) (A. R. 7-3-12-I and 9-1-2-III)

### Postscrimmage Kick Enforcement

ARTICLE 3. a. Under postscrimmage kick enforcement rules, fouls by Team B that satisfy the conditions in paragraph b (below) are treated as if Team B had been in possession at the time the foul was committed, even though by Rule 2-4-1-b-3 team possession had not changed.

- b. Postscrimmage kick enforcement applies *only* to fouls by Team B during a scrimmage kick and *only* under the following conditions:
  1. The kick is not during a try, a successful field goal, or in an extra period. (A.R. 10-2-3-IV)
  2. The ball crosses the neutral zone.
  3. The foul occurs before the end of the kick (A.R. 10-2-3-I, II, and V).
  4. Team B will next put the ball in play.

If these conditions are all met, the penalty is enforced according to the Three-And-One Principle. Team B is taken as the team in possession with the postscrimmage kick spot as the basic spot (Rule 10-2-2-c). See Rule 2-25-11 for the postscrimmage kick spot. (A.R. 10-2-3-I-VII)

### Fouls by Team A During Kicks

ARTICLE 4. Penalties for all fouls by the kicking team other than kick-catch interference (Rule 6-4) during a free kick play or a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the neutral zone (except field goal attempts) are enforced by rule either at the previous spot as the basic spot (**Exception:** Penalty option is a safety for fouls in Team A's end zone.) or at the spot where the subsequent



dead ball belongs to Team B, at the option of Team B. (Rules 6-1-8 and 6-3-13)

### **Fouls During Or After A Touchdown, Field Goal or Try:**

ARTICLE 5. a. Fouls by the nonscoring team during a down that ends in a touchdown (not on the try).

1. Fifteen-yard penalties for personal fouls and for unsportsmanlike conduct fouls are enforced on the try, the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods at the option of the scoring team.
  2. Five- and 10-yard penalties are not enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff. Such penalties are declined by rule unless enforcement is made possible by illegal touching of a kick during the down (A.R. 6-3-2-III-IV).
- b. Penalties for defensive pass interference fouls on a try from on or inside the three-yard line are enforced one-half the distance to the goal line. If the try is successful, the penalty is declined by rule.
- c. When a foul(s) occurs after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play on the try or there was a live-ball foul treated as a dead-ball foul on the touchdown play, enforcement is on the try, the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods at the option of the offended team (A.R. 3-2-3-V).
- d. Penalties for live-ball fouls during field goal plays are administered by rule. When the field goal is successful, Team A shall have the option of canceling the score and have the penalty enforced from the previous spot or declining the penalty(ies) and accepting the score. Team A may accept the score with penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls enforced on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods. Penalties for live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls and those for dead-ball fouls after a field goal down are enforced at the succeeding spot.
- e. Penalties for fouls during and after a try down are administered under Rules 8-3-3, 8-3-4, 8-3-5 and 10-2-5-b (A.R. 3-2-3-VI-VII).
- f. Distance penalties for fouls by either team may not extend a team's free kick restraining line behind its five-yard line. Penalties that would otherwise place the free kick restraining line behind a team's five-yard line are enforced from the next succeeding spot.

### **Half-Distance Enforcement Procedures**

ARTICLE 6. No distance penalty, including tries from on or inside the three-yard line, shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line [**Exceptions:** (1) Defensive pass interference on scrimmage downs, other than the try (Rules 7-3-8 and 10-2-5-b); and (2) On the try, defensive pass interference when the ball is snapped from outside the three-yard line].

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# RULE 11

## The Officials: Jurisdiction and Duties

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### SECTION 1. Jurisdiction

ARTICLE 1. The officials' jurisdiction begins 90 minutes before the scheduled kickoff and ends when the referee declares the score final [S14]. It is expected that a minimum of three officials will take the field at 90 minutes before kickoff. All officials will be on the field at 40 minutes prior to kickoff.

ARTICLE 2. At 90 minutes before kickoff the playing field will be divided into an "L-shaped" configuration with the 30 yard-lines forming the "L" (See Appendix D). No later than 40 minutes before kickoff, the configuration will change to the "Buffer Zone" configuration, and no player shall enter the 10-yard buffer zone between the 45 yard-lines (See Appendix D).

### SECTION 2. Responsibilities

ARTICLE 1. a. The game shall be played under the supervision of five, six, seven or eight officials.

b. Officiating crews, including the Instant Replay Official, will be assigned from the same officiating organization (effective August 1, 2020).

ARTICLE 2. Officiating responsibilities and mechanics are specified in the current edition of the Football Officials Manual, published annually under the jurisdiction of the College Football Officiating, LLC (CFO). Officials are responsible for knowing and applying the material in the Manual.

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# RULE 12

## Instant Replay

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### SECTION 1. Purpose and Philosophy

#### Purpose

ARTICLE 1. Instant replay is a process whereby video review is used to confirm, overturn or let stand certain on-field decisions (Rule 12-3) made by game officials.

#### Philosophy

ARTICLE 2. The instant replay process operates under the fundamental assumption that the ruling on the field is correct. The replay official may overturn a ruling if and only if the video evidence (Rule 12-6-1-c) convinces the replay official beyond all doubt that the ruling was incorrect. Without such indisputable video evidence, the replay official must allow the ruling to stand. (*Exception:* Targeting rule 12-3-5-a)

### SECTION 2. Eligibility for Instant Replay

#### Participation

ARTICLE 1. a. Any member institution may use instant replay, but there is no requirement to do so. If instant replay is used, it must be used in full compliance with this rule.

- b. For any nonconference game, if the home team is using instant replay, the visiting team does not have the option of declining its use for that game. If the home team is not using instant replay, it is not required to honor a request by the visiting team that it be used.

### SECTION 3. Reviewable Plays

As a general rule, the position of the ball in relation to the goal line is always reviewable by instant replay.

#### Scoring Plays

ARTICLE 1. Reviewable plays involving a potential score include:

- a. A potential touchdown or safety. [*Exception:* Safety by penalty for fouls that are not specifically reviewable.]
- b. Field goal attempts if and only if the ball is ruled (a) below or above the crossbar or (b) inside or outside the uprights when it is lower than the top of the uprights. If the ball is higher than the top of the uprights as it crosses the end line, the play may not be reviewed.

## Passes

ARTICLE 2. Reviewable plays involving passes include:

- a. Pass ruled complete, incomplete or intercepted anywhere in the field of play or an end zone.
- b. Forward pass touched by a player (eligible or ineligible) or an official, including whether the touching is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.
- c. Forward pass or forward handing when a ball carrier is or has been beyond the neutral zone.
- d. A forward pass or forward handing after a change of team possession.
- e. Pass ruled forward or backward.
  1. If the pass is ruled forward and is incomplete, the play is reviewable only if: The ball goes out of bounds; there is clear recovery of a loose ball in the immediate continuing action; or there is confirmation of the recovery by the officials on the field. If the replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers or the ball going out of bounds, the ruling of incomplete pass stands.
  2. If the replay official overturns an incomplete forward pass ruling and the ball is recovered, it belongs to the recovering team at the spot of the recovery and any advance is nullified.
- f. Location of the ball when it is obviously in the field of play or in the end zone and there is a ruling of intentional grounding on the field.

## Dead Ball and Loose Ball

ARTICLE 3. Reviewable plays involving potential dead balls and loose balls include:

- a. Loose ball by a potential passer ruled a fumble.
- b. Loose ball by a passer ruled incomplete forward pass when there is clear recovery or the ball goes out of bounds in the immediate continuing action after the loose ball.
  1. If the replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers, does not have confirmation of the recovery by the officials on the field, or the ball going out of bounds, the ruling of incomplete pass stands.
  2. If the replay official rules fumble and the ball is recovered, the ball belongs to the recovering team at the spot of the recovery and any advance is nullified.
- c. Live ball not ruled dead in possession of a ball carrier.
- d. Loose ball ruled dead (Rule 4-1-2-b-2), or live ball ruled dead in possession of a ball carrier, when the clear recovery of a loose ball occurs in the immediate continuing football action.
  1. If the ball is ruled dead and the replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers or confirmation of the recovery by the officials on the field, the dead-ball ruling stands.
  2. If the replay official rules that the ball was not dead, it belongs to the recovering team at the spot of the recovery and any advance is nullified.
- e. Ball carrier's forward progress, spot of fumble, or spot of out-of-bounds backward pass, with respect to a first down or the goal line.

- f. Catch or recovery of a fumble by a Team A player other than the fumbler before any change of possession during fourth down or a try.
- g. Ball carrier in or out of bounds. If a ball carrier is ruled out of bounds, the play is not reviewable, except as in Rules 12-3-1-a and 12-3-3-d.
- h. Catch, recovery or touching of a loose ball by a player in bounds or out of bounds.
- i. A loose ball touching on or beyond a sideline, goal line, or end line, touching a pylon, or breaking the plane of a goal line.
- j. Catch or recovery of a loose ball in the field of play or an end zone.
- k. Forward fumble that goes out of bounds with respect to a first down.

### **Kicks**

ARTICLE 4. Reviewable plays involving kicks include:

- a. Touching of a kick.
- b. Player beyond the neutral zone when kicking the ball.
- c. Kicking team player advancing a ball after a potential muffed kick/fumble by the receiving team.
- d. Scrimmage kick crossing the neutral zone.
- e. Blocking by players of the kicking team before they are eligible to touch the ball on an on-side kick.
- f. A player touching or recovering a kick or loose ball who is or has been out of bounds during the kick.
- g. Receiving team advancing after a fair catch signal.

### **Targeting**

ARTICLE 5 a. The replay official shall review all targeting fouls, Rules 9-1-3 and 9-1-4. For a player to be disqualified and the Targeting foul to be enforced, all elements of a Targeting foul must be confirmed by the Instant Replay Official. There is no option for stands as a part of a Targeting review. If any element of Targeting cannot be confirmed, then the Replay Official shall overturn the targeting foul.

Targeting elements include:

- 1. Rule 9-1-3:
  - (a) A player takes aim at an opponent for the purposes of attacking with forcible contact with the crown of the helmet.
  - (b) An indicator of targeting is present.
- 2. Rule 9-1-4:
  - (a) A defenseless opponent (Rule 2-27-14).
  - (b) A player takes aim at a defenseless opponent for the purposes of attacking with forcible contact to the head or neck area.
  - (c) An indicator of targeting is present.
- b. The replay official may create a targeting foul from the booth when all elements of targeting can be confirmed and the foul is not called by the officials on the field. Such a review may not be initiated by a coach's challenge.

## Miscellaneous

ARTICLE 6. Situations that may be addressed by the replay official:

- a. The number of players on the field for either team during a live ball.
- b. Clock adjustment and status when a ruling is reviewed and overturned with less than two minutes in the 2nd quarter or with less than two minutes in the 4th quarter.
- c. With less than one minute in either half and a replay review results in the on-field ruling being overturned, and the correct ruling would not have stopped the game clock, then the clock will be reset to the time the ball is declared dead by replay. The referee will subtract 10 seconds from the game clock and the game clock will start on the referee's signal. Either team may use a team timeout to avoid the runoff.
- d. Clock adjustment at the end of any quarter.

If the game clock expires at the end of any quarter, either during a down in which it should be stopped by rule through play when the ball becomes dead or after the down upon a request for an available team timeout, the replay official may restore time only under these conditions:

1. The replay official has indisputable video evidence that time should have remained on the game clock when the ball became dead or when the team timeout was granted.
  2. If time expires in a half, and the clock would start on the Referee's signal after review, there must be at least 3 seconds remaining when the ball should have been declared dead to restore time to the clock. With 2 seconds or 1 second remaining on the clock, the half is over unless Team A has a time out remaining (This does not impact situations when the clock is stopped and will remain stopped until the snap such as an incomplete pass or a ball carrier out of bounds.).
  3. In the fourth quarter only, to restore time, the score differential must be eight points or less (after a touchdown, all potential results of the try down must be considered).
  4. The replay official's video evidence includes the timeout signal by an official in the case where the game clock should have stopped for a requested team timeout.
- e. Correcting the number of a down.
    1. This includes the result of a penalty enforcement that includes an automatic first down or loss of down.
    2. The correction may be made at any time within that series of downs or before the ball is legally put in play after that series.
  - f. Any person who is not a player interfering with live-ball action occurring in the field of play (Rule 9-2-3).
  - g. An injured player at the initiation of the medical observer.

## Limitations on Reviewable Plays

ARTICLE 7. No other plays or officiating decisions are reviewable. However, the replay official may correct obvious errors that may have a significant impact on the outcome of the game, including those involving the game clock, whether or not a play is reviewable. This excludes fouls that are not specifically reviewable (See Article 8, following).

**Reviewable Fouls**

ARTICLE 8. The following plays are reviewable and the replay official may create a foul when there is no call by the on-field officials:

- a. Player making a forward pass or forward handoff when the player's entire body and the ball is or has been beyond the neutral zone or after a change of possession (Rule 12-3-2-c and -d).
- b. Player beyond the neutral zone when kicking the ball (Rule 12-3-4-b).
- c. Blocking by players of the kicking team before they are eligible to touch the ball on an onside kick (Rule 12-3-4-e).
- d. The number of players on the field for either team during a live ball (Rule 12-3-6-a).
- e. Illegal touching of a forward pass by an originally eligible receiver who has gone out of bounds or touching of a forward pass by an originally ineligible player (Rules 12-3-2-b and 12-3-3-h).
- f. A player touching or recovering a kick or loose ball who has been out of bounds and returned in bounds during the kick. (Rule 12-3-4-f).
- g. Forward pass that becomes illegal as a second pass after an on-field ruling of a backward pass is overturned (Rule 12-3-2-e).
- h. A clear and obvious targeting foul (Rule 12-3-5-b).

**SECTION 4. Instant Replay Personnel,  
Equipment and Location****Personnel**

ARTICLE 1. Instant replay personnel shall consist of the number of persons needed to operate the replay equipment within the necessary time constraints. There shall be a minimum of three persons to ensure that all plays are reviewed in an efficient and timely manner. Such persons are normally referred to as replay official, communicator and technician. Additional personnel may be used as needed.

**Equipment**

ARTICLE 2. a. The type of equipment used to carry out necessary instant replay duties shall be determined by each conference or member institution using instant replay.

- b. Additional equipment needed to allow instant replay personnel to communicate with the game referee when a game has been stopped for a play review shall be located on a sideline near the field of play and preferably outside a team area. Such equipment shall provide the game referee and the replay official a secure and private means of communication.
- c. A protected wireless official-to-official communication system (i.e., O2O) open only to the officiating crew, instant replay and conference officiating observer is permitted.

**Location**

ARTICLE 3. All equipment used to review a play during the replay process and the personnel using that equipment shall be located in a separate, secure location in the press box. This room shall not be available or accessible to any person not directly involved in instant replay. As an ongoing experiment, a

collaborative decision-making model during instant replay reviews that is in full compliance with Rule 12 is not limited to the press box of a stadium.

## SECTION 5. Initiating the Replay Process

### Game Stop

ARTICLE 1. There are two methods to stop a game to review a ruling on the field.

- a. The replay official and their crew shall review every play of a game. The replay official may stop a game at any time before the ball is next legally put in play (**Exception:** Rule 12-3-6-d) whenever they believe that:
  1. There is reasonable evidence to believe an error was made in the initial on-field ruling.
  2. The play is reviewable.
  3. The outcome of a review would have a direct, competitive impact on the game.
- b. The head coach of either team may request that the game be stopped and a play be reviewed by challenging the on-field ruling.
  1. A head coach initiates this challenge by taking a team timeout before the ball is next legally put in play (**Exception:** Rule 12-3-6-d) and informing the referee that they are challenging the ruling of the previous play. If a head coach's challenge is successful, they retain the challenge, which may be used only once more during the game. Thus, a coach may have a total of two challenges if and only if the initial challenge is successful.
  2. After a review has been completed, if the on-field ruling is overturned, that team's timeout will not be charged.
  3. After a review has been completed, and the on-field ruling is not overturned, the charged team timeout counts as one of the three permitted that team for that half or the one permitted in that extra period.
  4. A head coach may not challenge a ruling in which the game was stopped and a decision has already been made by the replay official. However, a head coach may challenge an aspect of the same play if that component of the play was not considered by the replay official as part of the initial review.
  5. If a head coach requests a team timeout to challenge an on-field ruling and the play being challenged is not reviewable, the timeout shall count as one of the three permitted team timeouts during that half of the game or the one permitted in that extra period.
  6. A head coach may not challenge an on-field ruling if all the team's timeouts have been used for that half or in that extra period.

### When To Stop a Game

ARTICLE 2. a. A game may be stopped, either by the replay official or by a head coach's challenge, at any time before the ball is next legally put in play (**Exception:** Rule 12-3-6-d).

- b. No game official may request that a game be stopped for a play to be reviewed.



## SECTION 6. Reviewing an On-Field Ruling

### Procedures

ARTICLE 1. a. When a game is to be stopped either by the replay official or by a head coach's challenge, the designated officials on the field will be notified by a paging system or other appropriate means.

- b. If the review is initiated by the replay official, the referee shall announce:  
 "The ruling on the previous play is ... (brief description of ruling). The play is under further review."

If the game has been stopped due to a head coach's challenge, the referee shall announce:

"The (name of institution) head coach has challenged the ruling of (state the ruling). The play is under further review."

- c. All reviews shall be based upon video evidence provided by and coming directly from the televised production of the game or from other video means available to the replay official that is also available to the television producer.
- d. After the referee has conferred with the replay official and the review process has been completed, the referee shall make one of the following announcements:
1. If the video evidence confirms the on-field ruling:  
 "After further review, the ruling on the field is confirmed."
  2. If there is no indisputable (conclusive) evidence to overturn the on-field ruling:  
 "After further review, the ruling on the field stands." (**Exception:** 12-3-5-a — Stands is not an allowable ruling or targeting.)
  3. If the on-field ruling is overturned (Rule 12-7):  
 "After further review, the ruling is [followed by a brief description of the video evidence]. Therefore, [followed by a brief description of the impact of the ruling]."
- e. If a ruling is overturned, the replay official shall supply the referee with all pertinent data as needed (next down, distance, yard line, position of the ball, clock status/adjustment) in order to resume play under the correct game conditions. If replay has all of the information required to overturn the on-field ruling, O2O may be utilized to facilitate the process.

### Restrictions

ARTICLE 2. a. There is no restriction on the number of times the replay official may stop a game for reviews.

- b. The expectation is that the replay official will not exceed two minutes to complete a review. If the review has end of game impact or has multiple aspects as a part of the review, it should be completed efficiently but will have no stated time limit.

## SECTION 7. Overturning an On-Field Ruling

### Criterion for Overturn

ARTICLE 1. To overturn an on-field ruling, the replay official must be convinced beyond all doubt by indisputable video evidence through one or more video replays provided to the monitor. [*Exception:* Targeting (Rule 12-3-5).]

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# Appendix A

## Game-Official Guidelines for Serious On-Field Player Injuries

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1. Players and coaches must go to and remain in the bench area. Direct players and coaches accordingly. Always ensure adequate lines of vision between the medical staffs and available emergency personnel.
2. Attempt to keep players a significant distance away from the seriously injured player or players.
3. Do not allow a player to roll an injured player over.
4. Do not allow players to assist a teammate who is lying on the field; i.e., removing the helmet or chin strap, or attempting to assist breathing by elevating the waist.
5. Do not allow players to pull an injured teammate or opponent from a pile.
6. Once the medical staff begins to assist an injured player, all members of the officiating crew should control the total playing field environment and team personnel, and allow the medical staff to perform services without interruption or interference.
7. Players and coaches should be appropriately controlled to avoid dictating medical services to the athletics trainers or team physicians, or taking up their time to perform such service.

*Note: Officials should have a reasonable knowledge of the location of emergency personnel equipment at all stadiums.*

(The NCAA Football Rules Committee expresses its appreciation to the National Football League for development of these guidelines.)

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# Appendix B

## Lightning Policy

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The NCAA provides detailed guidance on lightning (and other environmental hazards) in the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook. Please consult the latest version of this handbook, which is available at [www.NCAA.org](http://www.NCAA.org).

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# Appendix C

## Concussions

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A concussion is a brain injury that may be caused by a blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive” force transmitted to the head. **Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness or other obvious signs.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the previous one (hours, days or weeks) can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage and even death.

**Recognize and Refer:** To help recognize a concussion, watch for the following two events among your student-athletes during both games and practices:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.

**-AND-**

2. *Any change* in the student-athlete’s behavior, thinking or physical functioning (see signs and symptoms).

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

#### Signs Observed By Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events before hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

#### Symptoms Reported By Student Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

An athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, either at rest or during exertion, should be **removed immediately from practice or competition** and should not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that student-athletes can get checked.

### IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED:

1. **Remove the student-athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of concussion if your student-athlete has experienced a blow to the head. Do not allow the student-athlete to just “shake it off.” Each individual athlete will respond to concussions differently.

2. **Ensure that the student-athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Immediately refer the student-athlete to the appropriate athletics medical staff, such as a certified athletic trainer, team physician or health care professional experienced in concussion evaluation and management.
3. **Allow the student-athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion.** Allow athletics medical staff to rely on their clinical skills and protocols in evaluating the athlete to establish the appropriate time to return to play. A return-to-play progression should occur in an individualized, step-wise fashion with gradual increments in physical exertion and risk of contact. Follow your institution's physician supervised concussion management protocol.
4. Develop a game plan. Student-athletes should not return to play until cleared by the appropriate athletics medical staff. In fact, as concussion management continues to evolve with new science, the care is becoming more conservative and return-to-play time frames are getting longer. Coaches should have a game plan that accounts for student-athletes to be out for at least the remainder of the day.

For further details please refer to the "NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook Guideline on Concussions" or online at [www.NCAA.org/health-safety](http://www.NCAA.org/health-safety) and [www.CDC.gov/Concussion](http://www.CDC.gov/Concussion).

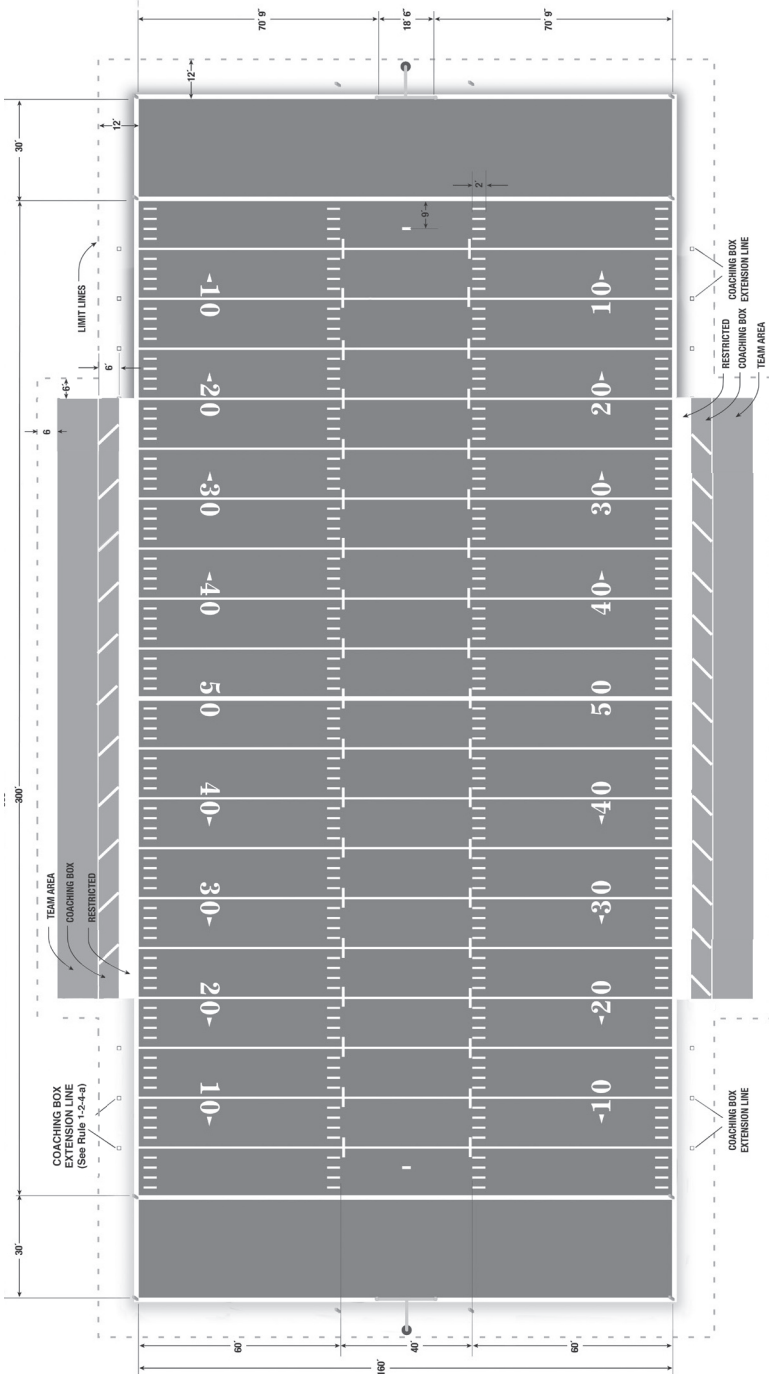
*Reference to any commercial entity or product or service on this page should not be construed as an endorsement by the Government or its products or services.*

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# **Appendix D**

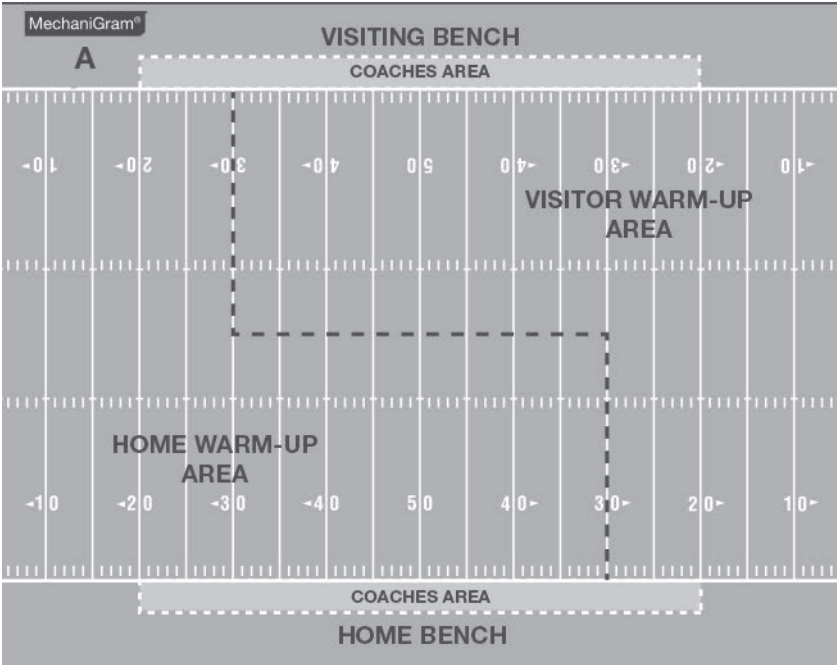
## **Field Diagrams**

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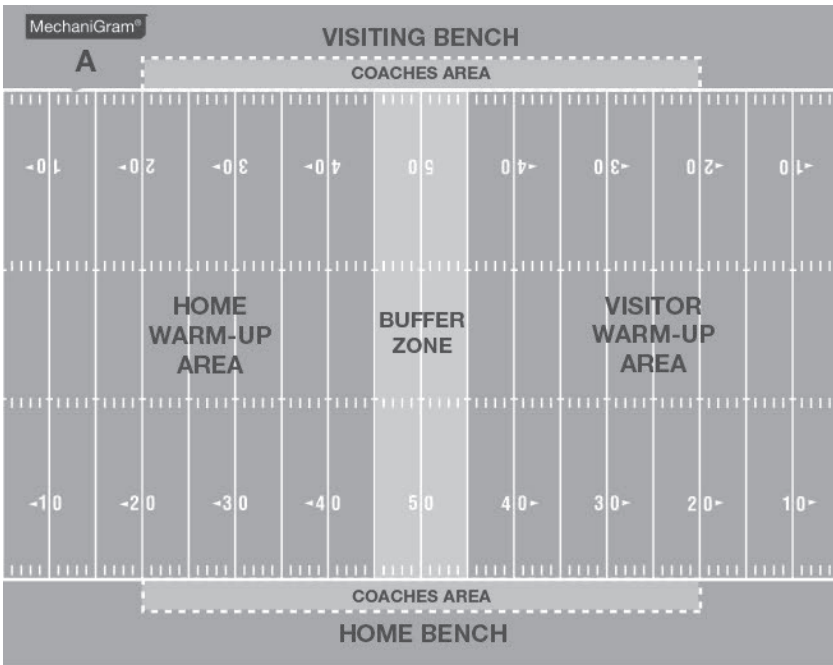




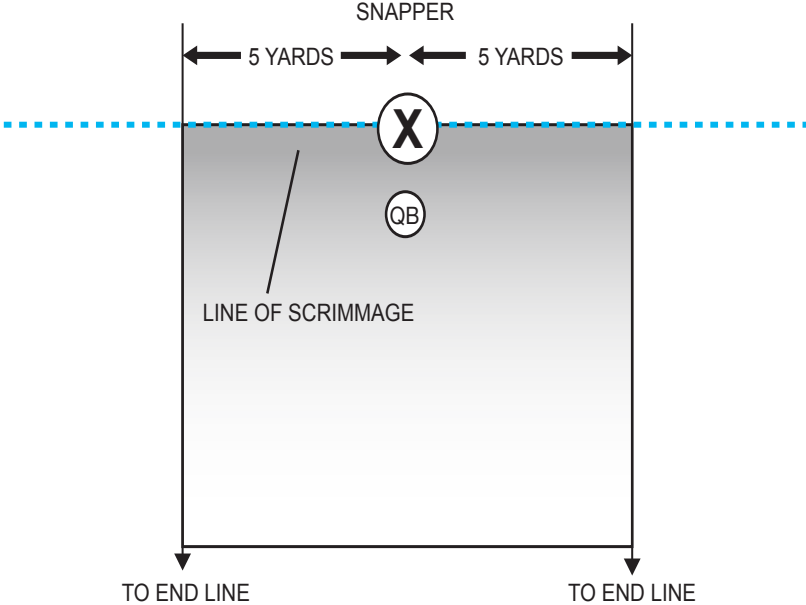
**PREGAME PROCEDURES:  
L-SHAPED CONFIGURATION**



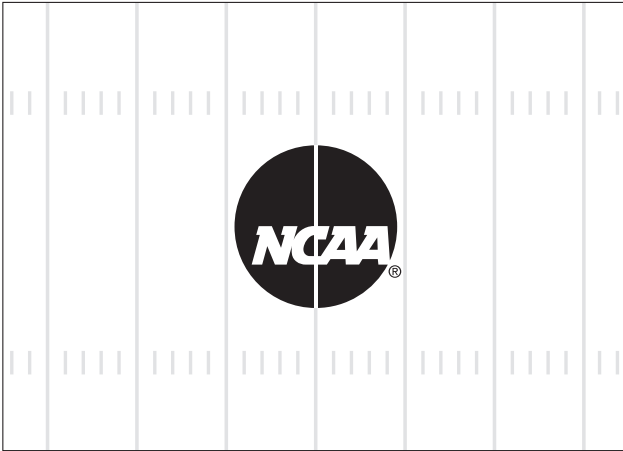
**PREGAME PROCEDURES:  
BUFFER ZONE CONFIGURATION**



### TACKLE BOX



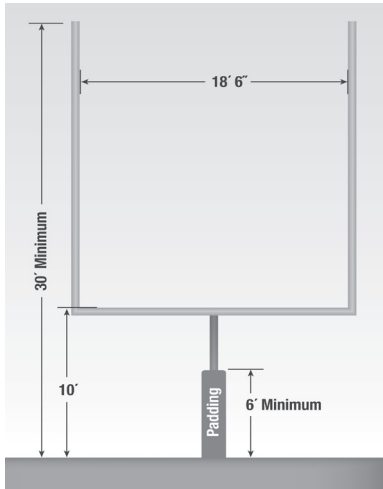
**PROPER PLACEMENT OF LOGO**



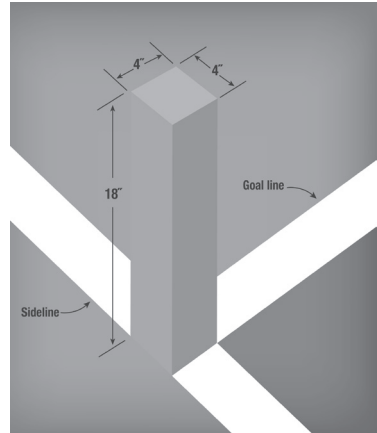
**Rule 1-2-1-f:** Contrasting decorative markings are permissible within the sidelines and between the goal lines. However, yard lines, goal lines and side lines must not be hidden. The markings also may not touch or enclose the hash marks or the numbers.

**IMPERMISSIBLE PLACEMENT OF LOGO**

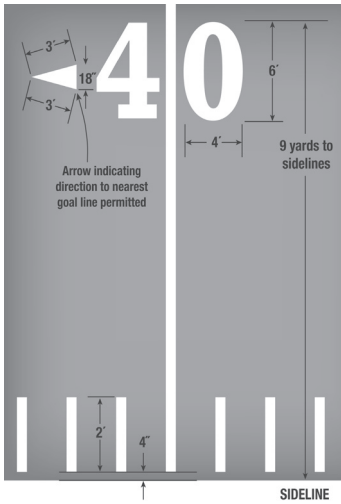




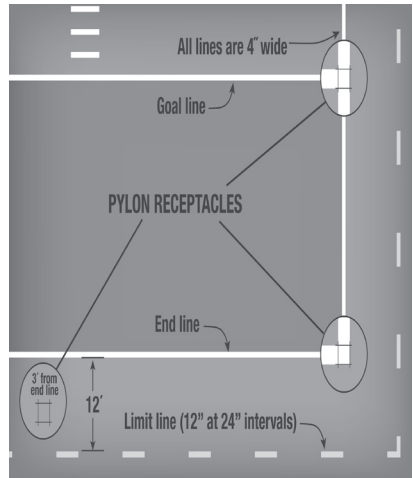
**GOAL POST DETAIL**



**PYLON DETAIL**



**RECOMMENDED YARD-LINE NUMBERING**



**END ZONE DETAIL**

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# Appendix E

## Equipment: Additional Details

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### A. Details Regarding Illegal Equipment

1. Hard or unyielding substances are permitted, if covered, only to protect an injury.
2. Hand and arm protectors (covered casts or splints) are permitted only to protect a fracture or dislocation.
3. Thigh guards may not be made of any hard substances, unless all surfaces are covered with material such as closed-cell vinyl foam that is at least 1/4-inch thick on the outside surface and at least 3/8-inch thick on the inside surface and the overlaps of the edges.
4. Shin guards must be covered on both sides and all edges with closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding at least 1/2-inch thick, or an alternate material of the same minimum thickness having similar physical properties.
5. Therapeutic or preventive knee braces must be worn under the pants and entirely covered from direct external exposure.
6. There may be no projection of metal or other hard substance from a player's person or clothing.
7. Shoe cleats (Rule 9-2-2-e) must conform to the following specifications:
  - a. They may not be more than 1/2-inch in length (measured from tip of cleat to the shoe). (See below for an exception for detachable cleats.)
  - b. They may not be made of any material that burrs, chips or fractures.
  - c. They may not have abrasive surfaces or cutting edges.
  - d. Nondetachable cleats only may not be made of any metallic material.
  - e. Detachable cleats:
    - (1) Must have an effective locking device.
    - (2) May not have concave sides.
    - (3) If conical they may not have flat free ends not parallel to their bases or less than 3/8-inch in diameter or rounded free ends having arcs greater than 7/16-inch.
    - (4) If oblong they may not have free ends not parallel with bases or that measure less than 1/4-inch by 3/4-inch.
    - (5) If circular or ring-shaped they must have rounded edges and a wall at least 3/16-inch thick.
    - (6) If steel-tipped they must contain low carbon steel of 1006 material, case hardened to .005-.008 depth and drawn to Rockwell hardness of approximately C55.

*Note: The distance in paragraph (a) for detachable cleats may exceed 1/2 inch if the cleat is attached to a 5/32-inch or less raised platform wider than the base of the cleat and extended across the width of the shoe to within 1/4-inch or less*

*of the outer edges of the sole. A single toe cleat does not require a raised platform that extends across the width of the sole. The raised platform of the toe cleat is limited to 5/32-inch or less. The 5/32-inch or less is measured from the lowest point of the platform to the sole of the shoe.*

8. The facemask must be constructed of nonbreakable material with rounded edges covered with resilient material designed to prevent chipping, burrs or an abrasiveness that would endanger players.
9. Shoulder pads may not have the leading edge of the epaulet rounded with a radius more than one-half the thickness of the material used.
10. No equipment that endangers other players may be worn. Artificial limbs are permitted, provided:
  - (a) An artificial limb must not give the wearer any advantage in competition.
  - (b) If necessary, the artificial limb should be padded to rebound as a natural limb.
11. Insignia, logos, labels:
  - a. Uniforms and all other items of apparel (e.g., warm-ups, socks, headbands, T-shirts, wristbands, visors, hats or gloves) may bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark) not to exceed 2.25 square inches in area (e.g., rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. See also Rule 1-4-6-d
  - b. No sizing, garment-care or other non-logo labels shall be on the outside of the uniform.
  - c. Professional league logos are prohibited.

## **B. New Equipment**

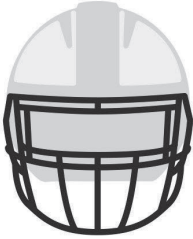
The NCAA Football Rules Committee is responsible for formulating the official playing rules for the sport. It is not responsible for testing or approving playing equipment for use in intercollegiate football.

Equipment manufacturers must develop playing equipment that meets the specifications established by the committee. The NCAA urges manufacturers to work with the various independent testing agencies to ensure the production of safe products. Neither the NCAA nor the committee certifies the safety of any football equipment. Only equipment that meets the dimensions and specifications in the NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations may be used in intercollegiate competition.

While the committee neither regulates the development of new equipment and nor sets technical or scientific standards for testing equipment, on occasion it may provide manufacturers with guidelines regarding the equipment-performance levels it considers consistent with the integrity of the game. The committee reserves the right to intercede to protect and maintain that integrity.

The NCAA Football Rules Committee suggests that manufacturers planning innovative changes in football equipment submit the equipment to the NCAA Football Rules Committee for review before production.

EXAMPLES OF PERMISSIBLE FACEMASKS



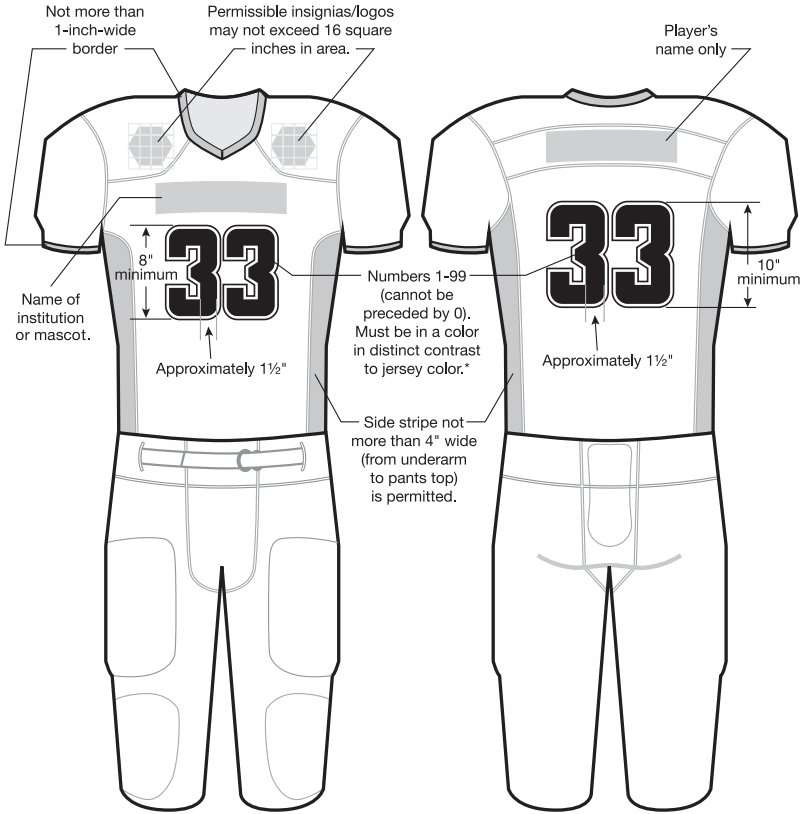


**EXAMPLES OF NONSTANDARD/OVERBUILT FACEMASKS**



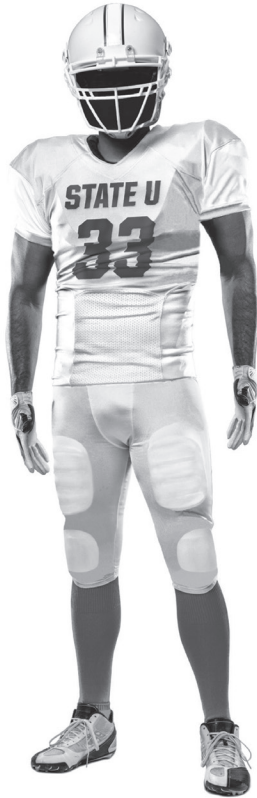
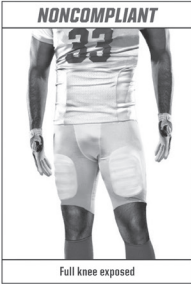
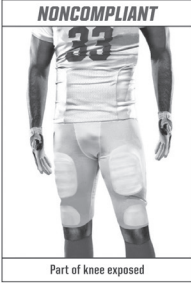
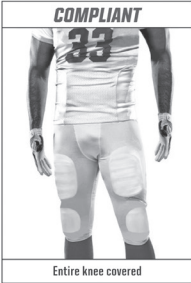
**FRONT VIEW**

**BACK VIEW**

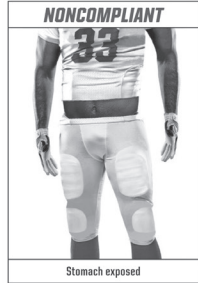


\* Numbering rules are intended to provide a clearly visible number for a variety of groups (e.g., coaches, media, fans, etc.). Therefore, numbers must be designed to be clearly visible from a press box in a variety of weather and lighting conditions.

# NCAA® UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT RULES



NCAA is a trademark of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.



# Appendix F



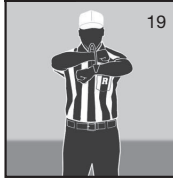
## Official Football Signals

<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	
<p>Ready for play *Untimed down</p>	<p>Start the clock</p>	<p>Stop the clock</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>TV/radio timeout</p>	<p>Touchdown Field Goal</p>	<p>Safety</p>	<p>Dead-ball foul/ touchback (move side to side)</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	
<p>First down</p>	<p>Loss of down</p>	<p>Incomplete pass/unsuccesful try or field goal/penalty declined/ coin toss option deferred</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>Legal touching</p>	<p>Inadvertent whistle</p>	<p>Disregard flag</p>	<p>End of period</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>Sideline warning</p>	<p>Illegal touching</p>	<p>Uncatchable pass</p>	<p>Offside B/Offside A or B on kickoff</p>

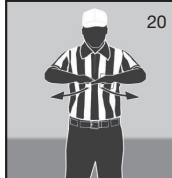
PlayPics courtesy of **REFEREE** ([www.referee.com](http://www.referee.com))

## OFFICIAL SIGNALS

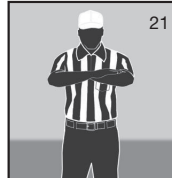
PlayPic®



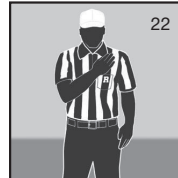
19  
False start/  
Encroachment A  
Illegal formation



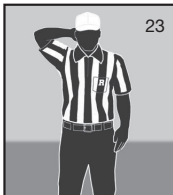
20  
Illegal motion (1 hand)  
Illegal shift (2 hands)



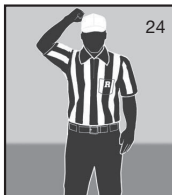
21  
Delay of game



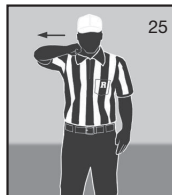
22  
Substitution  
infraction



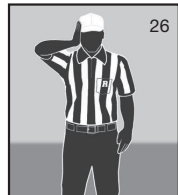
23  
Equipment violation



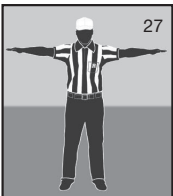
24  
Targeting



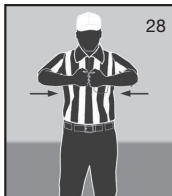
25  
Horse-collar



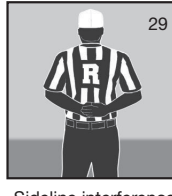
26  
Hands to the face



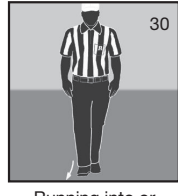
27  
Unsportsmanlike  
conduct



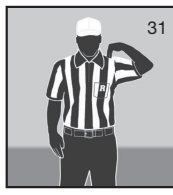
28  
Illegal blindside  
block



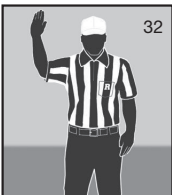
29  
Sideline interference  
Note: Face press box  
when giving signal.



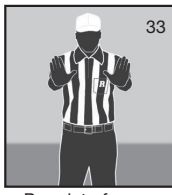
30  
Running into or  
roughing the kicker  
or holder



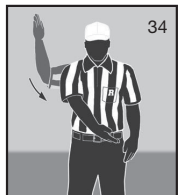
31  
Illegal batting/kicking  
(for illegal kicking, follow  
with a point toward foot)



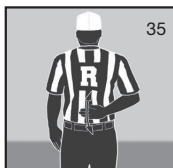
32  
Illegal fair catch



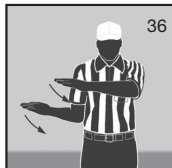
33  
Pass interference  
Kick-catching  
interference



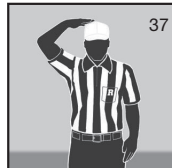
34  
Roughing the passer



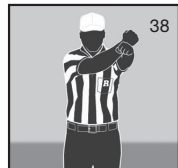
35  
Illegal pass  
Note: Face press box  
when giving signal.



36  
Intentional grounding



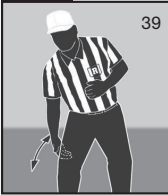
37  
Ineligible downfield  
on pass



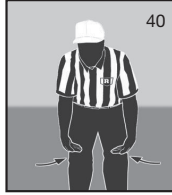
38  
Personal foul

# OFFICIAL SIGNALS

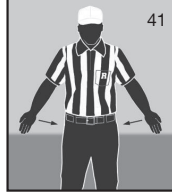
PlayPic®



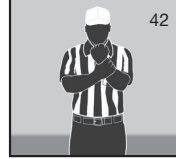
Clipping



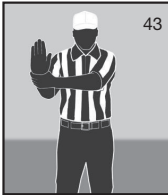
Block below the waist  
Illegal block



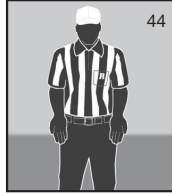
Chop block



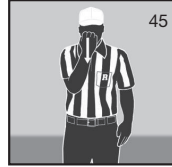
Holding  
Obstructing  
Illegal use of the  
hands or arms



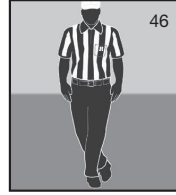
Illegal block  
in the back



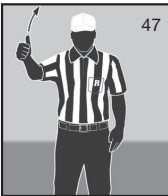
Helping the runner  
Interlocked  
interference



Grasping of  
face mask or  
helmet opening



Tripping



Disqualification

PlayPics courtesy of **REFEREE** ([www.referee.com](http://www.referee.com))

# Appendix G

## Summary of Penalties

**LEGEND:** “O” refers to official’s signal number (see Code of Official’s Signals); “R” is the rule number; “S” is the section number; “A” is the article number.

	O	R	S	A
<b>LOSS OF A DOWN</b>				
Illegal scrimmage kick [also loss of five yards].....	31*	6	3	10
Illegally handing ball forward [also loss of five yards].....	35*	7	1	6
Planned loose ball play [also loss of five yards].....	19*	7	1	7
Intentionally throwing backward pass out of bounds [also loss of five yards].....	35*	7	2	1
Illegal forward pass by Team A [also loss of five yards].....	35*	7	3	2
Intentionally grounding forward pass [spot of foul].....	36*	7	3	2
Forward pass illegally touched by player out of bounds.....	16*	7	3	4
Illegally batting ball [also loss of 10 yards] (see exceptions).....	31*	9	4	1
Illegally kicking ball [also loss of 10 yards] (see exceptions).....	31*	9	4	4
<b>LOSS OF FIVE YARDS</b>				
Alteration of playing surface for an advantage.....	19	1	2	9
Improper numbering.....	23	1	4	2
Coin-toss infractions.....	19	3	1	1
Delay after three timeouts expended.....	21	3	4	2
Illegal delay of the game.....	21	3	4	2
Advancing a dead ball.....	21	3	4	2
Disconcerting offensive signals.....	21	3	4	2
Substitution rules infractions.....	22	3	5	2
More Than Eleven Players in the formation or during the play.....	22	3	5	3
Putting ball in play before it is ready.....	21	4	1	4
Exceeding 40/25-second count.....	21	4	1	5
Infraction of free kick formation.....	18, 19	6	1	2
Team A blocking during a free kick.....	19	6	1	2
Player out of bounds when ball free-kicked.....	19	6	1	2
Team A player illegally goes out of bounds (free kick).....	19	6	1	2
Free kick out of bounds.....	19	6	2	1
Illegal kick [also loss of down if by Team A].....	31*	6	3	10
Team A player illegally goes out of bounds (scrimmage kick).....	19	6	3	12
Defensive Linemen—3-on-1 on field goal formation.....	19	6	3	14
Taking more than two steps after fair catch.....	21	6	5	2
Illegal snap.....	19	7	1	1
Snapper’s position and ball adjustment.....	19	7	1	3
Team A not within nine-yard marks after ready.....	19	7	1	3
False start or simulating start of a play.....	19	7	1	3
Encroachment (offense) at snap.....	19	7	1	3
Player out of bounds when ball is snapped.....	19	7	1	4
Offensive player illegally in motion at the snap.....	20	7	1	4
Illegal Formation.....	19	7	1	4
Illegal formation due to numbering exception.....	19	7	1	4
Illegal shift.....	20	7	1	4
Offside (defense).....	18	7	1	5
Abrupt defensive actions.....	21	7	1	5
Interference with opponent or ball.....	18	7	1	5
Defensive player charging unabated toward a back.....	19	7	1	5
Defensive player out of bounds at the snap.....	19	7	1	5
Illegally handing ball forward [also loss of down if by Team A].....	35*	7	1	6
Planned loose ball play [also loss of down].....	19*	7	1	7

Intentionally throwing backward pass out of bounds [also loss of down if by Team A].....	35*	7	2	1
Player on scrimmage line receiving snap.....	19	7	2	3
Illegal forward pass [also loss of down if by Team A] .....	35*	7	3	2
Ineligible receiver downfield .....	37	7	3	10
Forward pass illegally touched .....	16	7	3	11
Running into kicker or holder.....	30	9	1	16
Game Administration Interference [second and third infractions].....	21,29	9	2	5
Interlocked interference or helping ball carrier .....	44	9	3	2

### LOSS OF 10 YARDS

Home team delay.....	21	3	4	1
Illegal use of hands or arms (offense).....	42	9	3	3
Holding or obstruction (offense).....	42	9	3	3
Illegal block in the back (offense).....	43	9	3	3
Locked hands.....	42	9	3	3
Illegal use of hands (defense) [first down] .....	42	9	3	4
Holding or obstruction (defense) [first down].....	42	9	3	4
Illegal block in the back (defense) .....	43	9	3	4
Holding or obstruction (loose ball).....	42	9	3	7
Illegally batting loose ball [also loss of down].....	31*	9	4	1
Illegally batting a backward pass.....	31	9	4	1&2
Batting ball in possession by player in possession .....	31	9	4	3
Illegally kicking ball [also loss of down].....	31*	9	4	4

### LOSS OF 15 YARDS

Marking ball.....	27	1	3	3
Numbers changed to deceive the opponent .....	27	1	4	2
Home Jersey Worn Without Permission .....	27	1	4	5
Illegal signal devices [also ejection].....	27	1	4	10
Team not ready to play at start of either half .....	21	3	4	1
Rapid substitutions to opponents' disadvantage.....	22, 27	3	5	2
Illegal Wedge Formation .....	27	6	1	10
Interference with opportunity to catch a kick.....	33	6	4	1
Illegal block by fair-catch signaller.....	40	6	5	4
Tackling or blocking fair-catcher.....	38	6	5	5
Offensive pass interference .....	33	7	3	8
Defensive pass interference [first down].....	33	7	3	8
Striking; tripping [first down].....	38, 46	9	1	2
Targeting/Initiating Contact w/Crown of Helmet [first down] [Also Disqualification].....	38, 24, 47	9	1	3
Targeting/Initiating Contact to head/neck area of a defenseless player [first down] [Also Disqualification] .....	38, 24, 47	9	1	4
Clipping [first down] .....	39	9	1	5
Blocking below the waist [first down].....	40	9	1	6
Late Hit/action out of bounds [first down].....	38	9	1	7
Helmet / Face Mask Fouls [first down].....	38,45	9	1	8
Continuous contact to the helmet; Hands to the face [first down].....	38,45	9	1	8
Roughing the passer [first down] .....	34	9	1	9
Chop Blocking [first down].....	41	9	1	10
Leverage/Leaping [first down].....	38	9	1	11
Defensive restrictions .....	27	9	1	11
Fouling an opponent obviously out of the play [first down].....	38	9	1	12
Hurdling [first down].....	38	9	1	13
Illegal contact against the snapper [first down] .....	38	9	1	14
Horse-Collar Tackle [first down].....	38, 25	9	1	15
Roughing the kicker or holder [first down] .....	38, 30	9	1	16
Kicker simulating being roughed .....	27	9	1	16
Continued Participation Without a Helmet .....	38	9	1	17
Blind-Side Block .....	38	9	1	18
Obscene or vulgar language.....	27	9	2	1
Persons illegally on the field .....	27	9	2	1
Player not returning ball to official .....	27	9	2	1
Provoking ill will .....	27	9	2	1



Unsportsmanlike conduct.....	27	9	2	1
Persons leaving team area.....	27	9	2	1
Illegal return of disqualified player.....	27	9	2	1
Noise by persons subject to rules.....	27	9	2	1
Concealing the ball.....	27	9	2	2
Simulated replacements or substitutions.....	27	9	2	2
Equipment to confuse opponents.....	27	9	2	2
Intentionally contacting an official [also ejection].....	27	9	2	4
Game Administration Interference [fourth and subsequent].....	27, 29	9	2	5
Fighting [also ejection].....	27, 38, 47	9	5	1

### LOSS OF HALF DISTANCE TO GOAL LINE

If distance penalty exceeds half the distance (except on defensive pass interference).....	—	10	2	6
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### OFFENDED TEAM'S BALL AT SPOT OF FOUL

Defensive pass interference (if less than a 15-yard penalty) [first down].....	33	7	3	8
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### CHARGED TIMEOUT FOR A VIOLATION

Not wearing mandatory equipment.....	23	1	4	8
Wearing illegal equipment.....	23	1	4	8
Head coach's conference.....	21	3	3	4
Head coach's challenge.....	21	12	5	1
Illegal cleats [Also ejection].....	23	9	2	2

### VIOLATION

Illegal touching of free kick by kicking team.....	16	6	1	3
Illegal touching of scrimmage kick.....	16	6	3	2
Scrimmage-kick-batting exception.....	16	6	3	11

### WARNING

Game Administration Interference [first infraction].....	15	9	2	5
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### EJECTION

Prohibited signal devices.....	47	1	4	10
Flagrant fouls.....	47	9	1	1
Two unsportsmanlike fouls.....	47	9	2	6
Illegal cleats.....	47	9	2	2
Contacting an official.....	47	9	2	4
Use of tobacco.....	47	9	2	7
Fighting.....	47	9	5	1

### DISQUALIFICATION

Targeting/Initiating Contact w/Crown of Helmet.....	38	9	1	3
Targeting/Initiating Contact to head/neck of a defenseless player.....	38	9	1	4

### AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWNS (DEFENSIVE FOULS)

Pass interference.....	33	7	3	8
Striking; tripping.....	46,38	9	1	2
Targeting/Initiating Contact w/Crown of Helmet.....	38	9	1	3
Contact to head/neck area of a defenseless player.....	38	9	1	4
Clipping.....	39	9	1	5
Blocking below the waist.....	40	9	1	6
Late Hit/action out of bounds.....	38	9	1	7
Helmet / Face Mask Fouls.....	38,45	9	1	8
Roughing the passer.....	34	9	1	9
Chop Blocking.....	41	9	1	10
Leverage/Leaping.....	38	9	1	11
Fouling an opponent obviously out of the play.....	38	9	1	12
Hurdling.....	38	9	1	13
Illegal contact against the snapper.....	38	9	1	14
Horse-Collar Tackle.....	38, 31	9	1	15

Roughing the kicker.....	38, 30	9	1	16
Unsportsmanlike Conduct .....	27	9	2	1
Holding .....	42	9	3	4
Fighting .....	27, 38, 47	9	5	1

### WHEN-IN-QUESTION RULES

Catch or recovery not completed .....	—	2	4	3
Block below waist.....	—	2	3	2
Chop block .....	—	2	3	3
Block in the back .....	—	2	3	4
Ball not touched on kick or forward pass.....	—	2	11	4
Ball is accidentally kicked (touched).....	—	2	16	1
Forward pass rather than backward pass .....	—	2	19	2
Forward pass and not fumble.....	—	2	19	2
It is a catchable forward pass.....	—	2	19	4
Stop clock for injured player .....	—	3	3	5
Forward progress stopped.....	—	4	1	3
Kick-catch interference.....	—	6	4	1
It is a catchable forward pass.....	—	7	3	8
Touchback rather than safety .....	—	8	5	1
Targeting .....	—	9	1	3, 4
A player is defenseless.....	—	9	1	4
Twisting, turning or pulling face mask (helmet opening) .....	—	9	1	8
Roughing kicker rather than running into .....	—	9	1	16

### REFEREE'S DISCRETION

Penalty for unfair acts.....	27	9	2	3
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# Appendix H

## Accommodations for Student-Athletes with Disabilities

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The NCAA encourages participation by student-athletes with disabilities (physical or mental) in intercollegiate athletics and physical activities to the full extent of their interests and abilities. An NCAA member institution will have the right to seek, on behalf of any student-athlete with a disability participating on the member's team, a reasonable modification or accommodation of a playing rule, provided that the modification or accommodation would not:

1. Compromise the safety of, or increase the risk of injury to, any other student-athlete;
2. Change an essential element that would fundamentally alter the nature of the game; or
3. Provide the student-athlete an unfair advantage over the other competitors.

To request any such modification or accommodation, the member's director of athletics, or his/her designee, must submit a rule waiver request, in writing, to the secretary-rules editor. Such written request should describe:

- a. The playing rule from which relief is sought;
- b. The nature of the proposed modification or accommodation;
- c. The nature of the student-athlete's disability and basis for modification or accommodation; and
- d. The proposed duration of the requested modification or accommodation.

Additionally, each request should be accompanied by documentation evidencing the student-athlete's disability (e.g., a medical professional's letter). Upon receipt of a complete waiver request, the secretary-rules editor will consult with NCAA staff, the applicable sport/rules committee, other sport governing bodies, and/or outside experts, to conduct an individual inquiry as to whether the requested modification or accommodation can be made. In making this assessment, the NCAA may request additional information from the member institution. The secretary-rules editor will communicate the decision in writing (which may be via email) to the requesting member institution. If the request is granted, the member institution should be prepared to provide the written decision to the officiating staff, opposing coach(es), and tournament director (if applicable) for each competition in which the student-athlete will participate. NCAA members are directed to consult Guideline 2P of the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook for further considerations regarding participation by student-athletes with impairment.

