



2025 NCAA FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

(PROP Approved on April 16)

Feigning Injuries:

Proposed Change - Rule - 3-3-6

Injury Timeout

ARTICLE 6.

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. If a player presents as injured after the ball is spotted by officials, that team will be charged a Team Timeout or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used (A.R. 3-3-6 X-XII).
2. The player(s) may not return to the game until receiving approval of professional medical personnel designated by their institution.

Timeouts in Extra Periods:

Proposed Change – Rule 3-1-3-h

h. *Timeouts.*

Each team shall be allowed one timeout for the first extra period and one timeout for the second extra period. Each team will be allowed one timeout beginning with the third extra period until the game is ended. (Rule 3-3-8) 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 after the first and second extra periods. 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.

Instant Replay – Referee Announcement

Proposed Change – Rule 12-6-1-d

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 or if there is no clear and obvious evidence to overturn the on-field ruling:

“After further review, the ruling on the field is upheld.”

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 for targeting.)

2. 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].”

Scrimmage Kick Formation

Proposed Change – Rule 2-16-10

ARTICLE 10.

a. A scrimmage kick formation is a formation with no player other than the potential kicker (or holder) aligned within the frame of the snapper and no player aligned in the clear path from the snapper to the potential kicker (or holder), and with either (1) at least one potential kicker 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.

Proposed Change – Rule 6-3-14-a

Defensive Linemen on Scrimmage Kick Plays

ARTICLE 14.

a. If Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap and the snapper is not on the end of the line of scrimmage, 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).

Proposed Change – Rule 9-1-14

Contact Against the Snapper

ARTICLE 14.

When a team is in scrimmage kick formation and the snapper is not on the end of the line of scrimmage, 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).

“T” Signal on Free Kicks

Proposed Change – Rule 2-8-3-b

Invalid Signal

ARTICLE 3.

An invalid signal is any waving signal by **any** player of Team B:

- a. That does not meet the requirements of Article 2 (above); or
- b. Including a “T” signal given during a free kick (A.R. 6-5-3 VII); or
- c. 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
- d. That is given after a free kick is caught, strikes the ground or touches another player.[Exception: Rule 6-4-1-f]

Defensive Movement / Disconcerting Signals

Proposed Change – Rule 7-1-5-a-4 & 5

4. Any player within one yard of the line of scrimmage (stationary or not) may not make quick **and** abrupt or exaggerated actions that **simulate action at the snap and** are not part of normal defensive player movement **in an obvious attempt to make the offense foul (false start).** (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. **The terms “move” and “stem” are reserved for defensive cadence and may not be used by the offense. The offense may use a “clap” as a starting signal and this signal may not be used by the defense.**

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

Substitution Fouls after the Two-Minute Timeout

Proposed Change – Rule 3-5-3-b

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]

After the Two-Minute Timeout in either half, if the defense commits a substitution foul and 12 or more players are on the field and participate in a down, officials will penalize the defense for the foul and at the option of the offended team, reset the game clock back to the time displayed at the snap. The game clock will then restart on the next snap. If the 12th defender was attempting to exit but was still on the field at the snap and had no influence on the play, then the normal substitution penalty would be enforced with no clock adjustment (A.R. VIII – X).

Technology – Coach-to-Player Communications

Proposed Change – Rule 1-4-11-b Exception

Exception:

Coach-to-player communications through the helmet is permissive for the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) based on the following:

- Only one (1) player may be on the field per team at a time with radio receiving capability and the player must be identified by an unbranded green dot on the back midline of the helmet.
- Coach-to-player communications will be shut off when the play clock reaches 15 seconds or at the snap, whichever comes first, and will remain off throughout the down. When the play clock is reset to 25/40, the communications will be restored. If more than one green dot helmet per team is detected on the field by the game officials, the result is a live ball 5-yard equipment violation penalty, and this penalty initiates a conference review.
- On free kick plays, the coach-to-player communications will not be in effect. There is no limitation to the number of green dot helmets for either team during free kick plays.
- A conference may develop a policy to provide guidance in handling situations dealing with communications failure (See Appendix I).

Technology – Tablets

Proposed Change – Rule 1-4-11-a Exception 3

3. Standard tablets for in-game video only is permissive for all football playing subdivisions and are subject to the following guidelines:

- Tablets shall be restricted to “in game video” (current game) and may not include analytics, data or data access capability or any other communications access. No other video is allowed (e.g., scouting video, practice video, etc.).
- Tablets may be used in the coaches’ booth, sideline, and locker room. Tablets may not be interconnected to other devices to project larger/additional images except during halftime intermission in the locker room.
- Video may include a coach’s sideline, a coach’s endzone, and a program feed per play from the current game only and may also display game circumstances including down, distance, time, quarter, play-number, and score.
- A team may have up to 18 standard tablets active, and all team personnel may view the tablets.
- Team personnel engaging an official with a tablet to show or review video is guilty of an automatic Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul.
- A conference may develop a policy to provide guidance in handling situations dealing with tablet failure (See Appendix I).

Optional Equipment – Eye Shields

Proposed Change – Rule 1-4-6-c

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. A manufacturer may submit a “nearly clear” eye shield without mirroring or reflective effects for review to the NCAA Football Rules Committee by June 1 for the upcoming year. Neither the NCAA nor the committee certifies the safety of the eye shield.

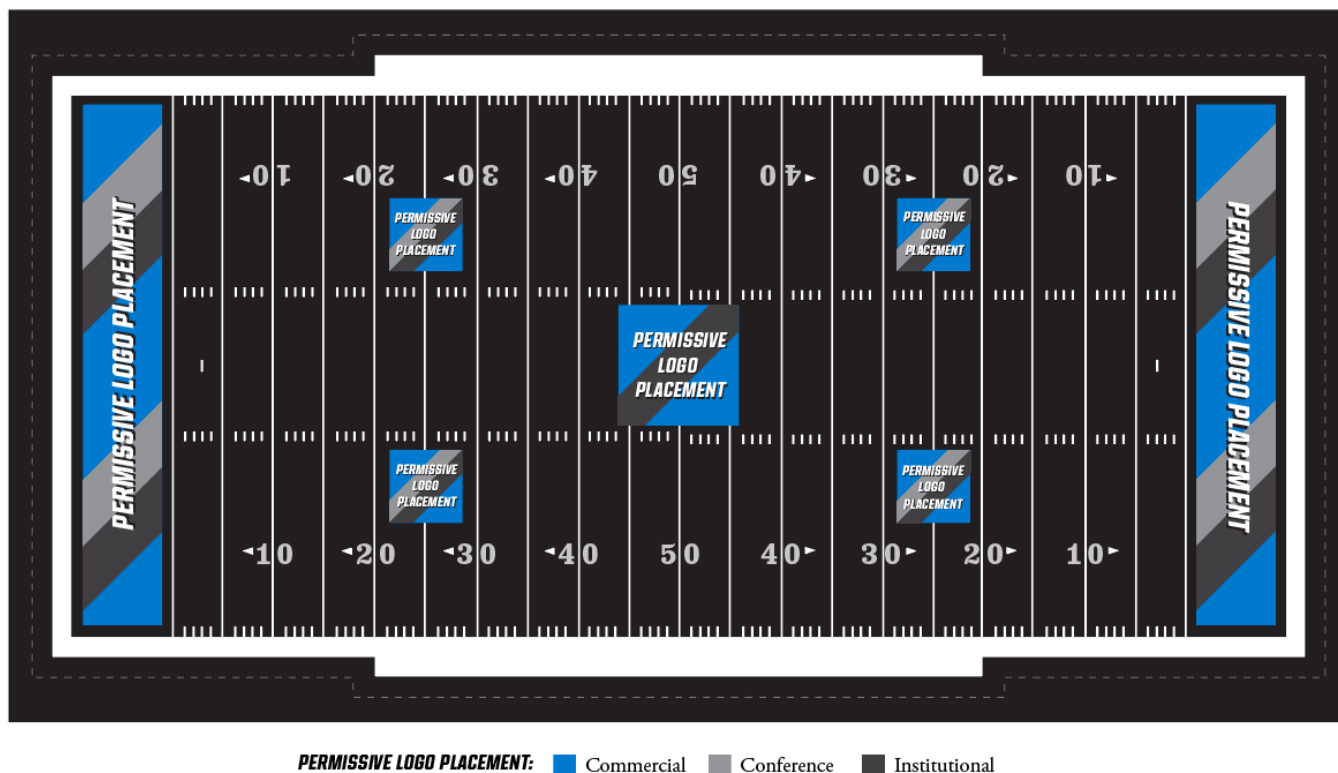
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Rule 1-2-1-h

h. Advertising is prohibited on the field except as follows:

1. During the regular season, a commercial entity, commercial sponsor, or individual may advertise on the field in any of the seven locations designated for contrasting decorative markings (i.e. one midfield logo centered on the 50-yard line, four smaller flanking logos, and two end zones). Only one advertisement / logo is allowed per location. These advertisements must adhere to paragraph f above. No other advertisements may be on the field. (See Appendix D for Examples of Permissible Field Markings.)

2. For postseason games and neutral-site games with a title sponsor whose name is associated with the name of that game may also 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/end zone advertisements. Two additional flanking locations are available for these games. These advertisements must adhere to paragraph f above. No other advertisements may be on the field. (See Appendix D for Examples of Permissible Field Markings.)



Rule 3-3-6-b

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, a participating 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).

Rule 4-1-3-b Exception

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, handed or advanced by rule] (A.R.4-1-3-I).

Rule 8-5-1-a 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 an opponent's 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.

Rule 9-1-6-a

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 with any part of their body inside 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. A block initiated 1-yard beyond the neutral zone is considered within the tackle box.

"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.

Rule 9-1-9-a

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.

Note: For 1, 2, & 4 above, this includes contact to an offensive player in a passing posture with focus downfield.

Rule 9-2-5-b Penalty

b. Physical interference with an official is a foul charged to the team for unsportsmanlike conduct unless the individual can be readily identified. (A.R.9-2-5-I)

PENALTY—Team unsportsmanlike conduct unless the individual can be readily identified. 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]

Rule 10-2-2-b

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, personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct. (**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.

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