



2024 NCAA FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES (PROP Approval on April 18)

Rules Changes:

Coach to Player Communications (Rule 1-4-11-b, Exception)

Coach to player communications through the helmet is permissive in 2024 for the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) based on the following guidelines:

- Only 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 cut off when the play clock reaches 15 seconds or at the snap, whichever comes first. When the play clock is reset to 25/40, the communications will be turned back on.
- If more than 1 green dot helmet 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.
- A conference may develop a policy to provide guidance in handling situations dealing with communications failure.
- Back Judge mechanics will be developed dealing with an in stadium play clock failure and Rule 3-2-2-f, starting of the play clock when the game clock is less than 40/25 will be modified.
- FCS teams playing an FBS team may utilize Coach to Player communications in that game.

Tablets for In-game Video (Rule 1-4-11-a, Exception 3)

Standard Tablets for in-game video only is permissive in 2024 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 coach’s box, sideline, and locker room and may not be interconnected to other devices to project larger/additional images.
- Video may include coach’s sideline, 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 / score.
- A team may have up to 18 standard tablets active, and all Team personnel may view the tablets.
- If any team personnel engages an official with a tablet to show or review video, an automatic Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul will result.

Wearable Technologies

The committee had a thorough discussion of wearable technologies. The committee invites non FBS conferences that are interested in wearable technologies to submit an experimental proposal to the committee.

Two-Minute Timeout (Rule 3-3-5)

When the game clock is running and the ball is not live, the Referee shall stop the clock with exactly two minutes remaining in the second and fourth quarters for a Two-Minute Timeout. If the ball is live when the game clock reaches two minutes in the second and fourth quarters, the play will continue, and the Referee shall stop the clock when the ball is subsequently declared dead for a Two Minute Timeout.

The radio / TV broadcast partner will hold back at least 1 media timeout to coincide with the Two-Minute Timeout. If there is no media timeout partner in the game, the timeout shall be one minute plus the five-second referee notification and the 25-second play clock interval.

This change will synchronize all in-game timing rule changes to be effective following the Two-Minute Timeout including the first down timing rules, runs, fumbles, and backward passes out of bounds, Rule 3-4-3-b penalty enforcement, replay clock adjustment, and all 10-Second Runoff situations.

The play clock will be set at 25 seconds.

Uniforms – Mandatory and Illegal Equipment Enforcement (Rule 1-4-8-b) Not Approved by PROP.

~~In recent years, the committee has expressed concerns about the look of player's uniforms, specifically pants. The committee is proposing a stronger enforcement structure for clear violations of the rule. 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. On the 1st occurrence, the official will throw the flag and in addition to the player leaving the game, the head coach will receive a warning. On any subsequent equipment violation by a member of that team, the official throws the flag, the player must leave the game, and a timeout is charged to the team. If a team has exhausted their timeouts, a delay of game penalty will be assessed.~~

~~The player may be allowed to return without missing a down if the team takes or is charged a team timeout, but in any event the player may not play with illegal equipment or without mandatory equipment.~~

First Down Timing Rules (Rule 3-3-2-e-1)

After a year of review, Division III committee members decided to adopt the timing rules where the game clock will continue to run when a first down is gained in bounds. The game clock will be stopped subsequent to the Two-Minute Timeout in each half. Divisions I and II institutions utilized this timing rule last season.

Collaborative Replay (Rule 12-4-3)

Conferences are now allowed the option of implementing a Collaborative Instant Replay review system. Currently, this is an experimental rule.

A collaborative decision-making model during instant replay reviews that is in full compliance with Rule 12 and follows the Collaborative Replay Officiating Standards is not limited to the press box of a stadium (Part II Officiating Standards, Section 16).

Horse-Collar Tackle (Rule 9-1-15)

For player safety, Horse-collar tackles that occur within the tackle box will be penalized as a 15-yard personal foul penalty. Currently, a horse-collar tackle within the tackle box is not a foul.

Replay - Halftime Intermission (Rule 3-2-1-b)

At the end of the first half, after the teams have left the field and the Referee has cleared the final play with the on-field crew and the instant replay official, and there is no coach challenge, the Referee will declare the half ended. After the Referee has declared the first half ended, there can be no additional replay reviews from the previous play (Exception: For games in which Instant Replay is not used, a halftime Targeting video review as outlined in the Penalty section of Rule 9-1-3 & 9-1-4 may be completed).

Major Editorial Changes:

Players Numbering – (Rule 1-4-2-d)

Currently, if a player enters the game after changing their jersey number during the game, the player must report to the Referee. For clarity, if a player enters the game with a number different than is on the game day roster, that player must report to the Referee. A player who enters the game after changing their number or with a different number than is on the game day roster and does not report commits a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Prohibited Field Equipment – (Rule 1-4-11)

Editorial changes to a broad number of issues were made within Rule 1-4-11.
(* indicates experimental rule from the previous season)

*Only head coaches may be interviewed in the intermission between the first and second periods, during the halftime intermission and during the intermission between the third and fourth periods. The head coach interviews between the first and second periods and the third and fourth periods may not occur during live action and must occur during a regularly scheduled broadcast timeout. The broadcast timeout may not be extended to accommodate the interview. The location of the interview shall be just outside the team area.

*After a change of possession or timeout, one camera is permitted from the television broadcast onto the playing enclosure for the purpose of capturing team personnel entering the field of play. The broadcast camera is not permitted to enter the team area or team huddle and must exit the field of play when players enter the huddle or line up in a formation. The broadcast camera is restricted to the area outside the hash marks.

*Following a Touchdown, one camera is permitted from the television broadcast into the end zone for the purpose of capturing team personnel reaction. The camera must immediately exit the end zone and field of play when the ball is ready for play for the Try Down.

-Institutional videographers may be in the team area as a part of that institution's 50 credentialed individuals. This video may not be used during any live broadcast or digital stream of the game. (Previous rule limited the number of Institutional Videographers to one.)

-Institutional ball personnel are prohibited from wearing smart watches or any communications technology while on the opponent's sideline.

Dead Ball and Loose Ball – (Rule 12-3-3-d-3)

If a passer is ruled down or out of bounds prior to throwing a pass and the replay official has indisputable video evidence that the ball was released prior to the dead ball ruling, replay can rule on the immediate continuing action. If the pass is caught by either team, they are awarded possession at that spot with no advance. If the pass is incomplete, the down counts.

Penalty Enforcement after Replay Review – (Rule 12-3-6-i & j)

Rules language added that codifies penalty enforcement after replay reviews. Fouls that carry 5-yard and 10-yard penalties are not enforced if the ruling is overturned, and they become dead ball fouls. Personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls are always enforced, regardless of the outcome of a replay review.

Steve Shaw

CFO National Coordinator of Football Officials

Secretary-Rules Editor, NCAA Football Rules Committee

March 2024