

## 2007 Football Rules Changes and Their Impact on Officiating

### **Rule 3-1-1**

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: Little or no impact. Officials must be aware of potential confrontations prior to all kick-offs.***

### **Rule 3-2-2-h**

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: HL, LJ, SJ, and FJ will have to be pro-active and make certain teams are on the field, ready to play when TV comes back from their break. TV directors and Red Hats must be on the same page, and officials must receive accurate timing information 30 seconds and 15 seconds prior to TV coming back from commercial. The BJ must make certain that the play clock has been properly re-set to 15 seconds in all cases where a TV time-out has been taken. Schools must make certain that their play clocks will count-down from 15 seconds when they have been run-down from 25 to 15 seconds during the time-out period. Some older clocks may re-set to 25 seconds after having been stopped and will not count down from the point of interruption.***

### **Rule 3-2-2-i.**

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: Thank goodness this does not happen very often, but when it does, the fair and equitable thing to do is to replay the down from the same point in time as before. In games were Instant Replay is available, Replay officials will have an accurate accounting of the time on the clock when the play started. In other games, officials must use whatever information available to them that allows them to accurately put time back on the clock.***

**Rule 3-2-5**

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: Very little; officials are comfortable with this rule from year's past and this change should not be an issue. This rule will cause less time to come off the clock during kick-offs and will subsequently add plays to the game.***

**Rule 3-2-5-e**

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: Very little; officials are comfortable with this rule from year's past and this change should not be an issue. Officials must be pro-active on the sidelines and make certain teams come onto the field promptly after a change of possession. This rule will cause less time to come off the clock since the clock will not be running during the ready for play and will subsequently add plays to the game.***

**Rule 3-3-7-a**

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: There will be little or no impact on officiating, but each crew must be fully aware of the television time-out formats for each of their games, keeping in mind that TV networks/partners are not the same for every telecast.***

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

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

*Exceptions (administrative duties):*

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: Officials must give a clear “dead-ball signal” (open hand raised straight up overhead) when the ball is obviously dead. This rule does not become “official” until the 2008 season, but there appears to be lots of support from coaches for this rule. With that said, schools have a year to prepare for the purchase of a new clock, or the retro-fitting of an existing clock, that can be re-set to 40 seconds and 25 seconds, and it is recommended that the clock also be programmed so it can be re-set to 15 seconds for those occasions when the “play clock” will run-down from “15” after TV time-outs.***

**Rule 6-1-1**

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: There should be more kick-off returns, which mean more “high-excitement plays” to officiate. As a general rule, “change of possession” type plays – kick-offs, punt returns, fumble and interception returns, etc. – create a lot of action in the open field and these type of plays create opportunities for major fouls. Officials must have 100% concentration and focus on these types of plays.***

### **Rule 6-1-2**

Insertion following the second sentence in the rules regarding kickoffs:

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: Crews need to be pro-active on all kick-offs during fall scrimmages and early season games, and make certain the kickers and receivers are given frequent reminders during the early season. Crews will need to complete their “kick-off duties” efficiently so that the play clock can be started in a timely manner – one that insures a consistent tempo for all kick-offs.***

### **Rule 6-2-1-Penalty**

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: Little or no impact.***

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

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

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

***Impact on Officiating: Little or no impact. This change expands the number of fouls that can be “tacked on” to the end of the return in punt and kick-off situations.***

**Rule 9-3-5-b-3**

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

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

*Impact on Officiating: This will provide for another tough judgment call for the Umpire and Side Judge to go along with the “pull and shoot,” and “leaping” calls, and “contact on the center” calls for the Umpire.*

**Rule 12-3-1**

Egregious fouls added to reviewable instant replays:

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

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

*Impact on Officiating: Little or no impact. Replay officials must add this to their duties.*