



MEMORANDUM

February 18, 2009

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TO: Head Football Coaches, Conference Commissioners and Coordinators of  
Officials at NCAA member institutions that sponsor football.

FROM: Mike Bellotti, chair  
NCAA Football Rules Committee

Rogers Redding, secretary-rules editor  
NCAA Football Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Comment period.

The Football Rules Committee has proposed the attached rules changes during its annual meeting February 9-11. Before these rules changes are implemented into the rules book, they must be approved by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP). PROP will review these rules proposals on an upcoming conference call. PROP evaluates the new rules in terms of negative impact on the image of the game, safety concerns or financial impact on institutions.

You have the opportunity to give your feedback to PROP about any of the attached rules changes before final approval is granted. For ease of reference, the press release which was distributed after the meeting is included.

Please e-mail or fax Ty Halpin at the NCAA ([thalpin@ncaa.org](mailto:thalpin@ncaa.org) or fax: 317/917-6800) your comments by **Tuesday, March 31**. If appropriate, please reference the rule and specify whether your feedback concerns a negative impact to the image of the game, student-athlete safety or a significant financial impact.

MB/RR:nkb

Enclosure

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National Collegiate Athletic Association

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## ***News Release***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

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### NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE STRENGTHENS RULES TO PROTECT STUDENT-ATHLETES AND CONFIRMS SPORTSMANSHIP ENFORCEMENT

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. --- The NCAA Football Rules Committee reviewed and confirmed its rules relating to student-athlete safety and sportsmanship, calling on officials to continue to use strict enforcement regarding flagrant personal fouls. The committee, which met February 9-11, reviewed several examples of contact above the shoulders on defenseless players, which was a rule change before last season. While enforcement was generally positive at all levels last season, the committee continues to be concerned with flagrant contact that endangers student-athletes. All rules proposals will be sent for membership comment and considered by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel before taking effect.

“The safety of the players in our game is of critical importance,” said Mike Bellotti, chair of the committee and head coach at the University of Oregon. “We believe, in some cases, that players must be penalized more severely when the contact is clearly flagrant and dangerous.”

In these cases, the committee is instructing officials to eject student-athletes more frequently when warranted. The group will distribute several video examples to officials, coaches and conference administrators to educate and clarify what types of plays should result in an ejection. Additionally, any flagrant foul will automatically trigger a review by the offending

player's conference. A representative from the National Athletic Trainers Association participated in discussions and noted that both players are at risk when these fouls occur.

“We feel that the officials and coaches have generally responded well to last year's rules change and this is another step,” said Rogers Redding, secretary-rules editor and coordinator of officials for the Southeastern Conference.

Unsportsmanlike conduct fouls were another main topic of discussion. The committee confirmed its rules in this area and developed a philosophy to help guide officials and coaches. The group also gave serious consideration to applying these fouls as live-ball fouls, which would penalize the offending team at the spot of the foul. The committee plans to continue to monitor this for possible future implementation and developed a statement to distribute and include in the rules book (attached to this release).

“College football is a team game and prolonged acts that draw attention to the individual are not consistent with that philosophy,” said Bellotti. “Overall, officials have maintained a strong standard in this area and this must continue.”

In other committee actions, the committee:

- Redefined the rules for roughing the kicker. Now, if the punter carries the ball outside the tackle box, he loses protections provided as a kicker.
- Approved a request to allow teams, when approved by the conference office and agreed to by both teams, to wear colored jerseys as long as they are clearly contrasting in color. When agreement is unable to be reached, the visiting team shall wear white.
- Noted that the next edition of the rules book will be in effect for the 2009 and 2010 football seasons as part of the NCAA's two-year playing rules cycle.

## **NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE**

### **Statement on Sportsmanship by the NCAA Football Rules Committee**

**Adopted February 11, 2009**

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 inappropriately draw attention to themselves in a pre-meditated, 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 his institution.

Currently the penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct fouls are administered by treating these as dead-ball fouls, even though the fouls often take place while the ball is in play. The committee is considering the possibility that if such a foul is committed while the ball is in play, the penalty would be enforced according to the rules for other live-ball fouls. This would mean, for example, that if a ball carrier about to score a touchdown taunted his opponents while still in the field of play, the score would be voided and the penalty enforced from the spot of the foul. Although the committee has not taken any action in this regard, it is a viable option for possible rules changes in the future.

# NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE

## 2009-10 Major Changes

### **1-4-3-a Jersey Colors**

ARTICLE 3. a. Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colors. Players on the same team shall wear jerseys of the same color and design.

1. 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.

**2. 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.**

**3. If on the kickoff at the start of each half, the visiting team wears a colored jersey in violation of the conditions specified in Rule 1-4-3-a-2 (above), 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]**

RATIONALE: Creates a process to allow the visiting team to wear colored jerseys when the home team also wears colored jerseys. In addition, the change establishes a penalty for deliberate violation of the rule.

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### **2-34 Definition of Tackle Box**

#### **SECTION 34. Tackle Box**

**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.**

RATIONALE: Defines the area used for limitations on the rules for intentional grounding and roughing the kicker.

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### **3-2-3-a-1 Extension of Periods**

Extension of Periods

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

1. a penalty is accepted for a live-ball foul(s) not treated as a dead-ball foul.(Exception: Rule 10-2-2-g-1). **The period is *not* extended if the statement of penalty includes loss of down.**

RATIONALE: Prevents the offense from gaining the unfair advantage of an additional play if they complete an illegal forward pass for a touchdown as time in a half expires.

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**3-2-4-c, 3-3-5-f Play clock set to 40 seconds for a Team B injury.**

**3-2-4-c**

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:

4. Injury Timeout for a Team A player only. The play clock is set to 40 seconds for an injury to a player of Team B.

**3-3-5-f**

**f. Following a timeout for an injured Team B player, the play clock shall be set at 40 seconds.**

RATIONALE: This codifies a change made via interpretation during the 2008 season. Team B could potentially “game” the clock rules if the play clock is set to 25 seconds for an injury to a Team B player with fewer than 40 seconds left in a half.

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**9-1-2-q Face Mask foul**

**Chin Strap included**

- q. No player shall 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 twisted, turned or pulled. When in question, it is a foul.

RATIONALE: Chin strap added as a safety measure.

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**9-1-4-a-5 Roughing the Kicker**

5. Protection of the kicker ends (a) when he has had a reasonable time to regain his balance(A.R. 9-1-4-IV); or (b) **when he carries the ball outside the tackle box (Rule 2-34) before kicking.**

RATIONALE: Addresses the issue of the rugby-style kicker who runs for many steps before kicking the ball. Under this change, he would not receive roughing-the-kicker protection if he is outside the tackle box when he kicks. He retains the usual protection from unnecessary roughness fouls.

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**Flagrant Personal Fouls**

## **SECTION 6. Flagrant Personal Fouls**

### **Player Ejection**

**ARTICLE 1.** When a player is disqualified from the game due to a flagrant personal foul, that team's conference shall automatically initiate a video review for possible additional sanctions prior to the next scheduled game.

### **Targeting/Initiating Contact**

**ARTICLE 2.** When there is a foul called for targeting/initiating contact (Rule 9-1-3) that does not result in a player ejection, there shall automatically be a video review by the conference for possible additional sanctions prior to the next scheduled game.

### **Foul Not Called**

**ARTICLE 3.** 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.

**RATIONALE:** Focuses attention on flagrant personal fouls by mandating a process for post-game review, possibly leading to additional sanctions imposed by the conference.

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