

NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations

Major Editorial Changes for 2011-12

For years this document has contained every single editorial change from year to year. However, with the switch to a 2-year rules cycle and the recent number of changes, it is a Herculean task to document each and every change. This year, only the major changes are catalogued. Specifically, minor changes in wording that don't change the spirit and intent of the rule won't be found here. Neither will references to renumbered rules or Approved Rulings.

Rules changes, since they are shaded in the rulebook, are outside the scope of this document. However, where a paragraph contains both a rule change and an editorial change, it is listed here with the rule change in gray and the editorial change in yellow. This document is based on the electronic version of the Rules and Interpretations distributed on May 24, 2011.

Part I: The Rules

| Rule | 2011-12 | 2009-10 |
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| 1-1-5-b FR-15 | [Deleted] | A field captain's first announced choice of any options offered his team shall be irrevocable. |
| 1-2-8-d FR-19 | 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. | |
| 1-3-2-f FR-21 | ... 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. | ... testing 60 minutes before the start of the game. |
| 1-4-2-b (old) | [Moved to 7-1-4-a-5] | |
| 1-4-3 through 1-4-8 FR-22-25 | [Major rewrite. Large portions moved to Appendix E. See rule book for complete text.] | |
| 2-1-1-a FR-27 | [Deleted] | ... If there is a conflict between the official rules and approved rulings, the rules take precedence. |
| 2-4-3-a-3 FR-29 | ... If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and firm control of the ball, it is a catch or interception even though a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out of bounds ... | ... If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch even though a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out of bounds ... |
| 2-8-1-d FR-30 | If the receiver shades his eyes from the sun without waving his hand(s), the ball is live ... | If the receiver shades his eyes from the sun, the ball is live ... |
| 2-8-3 FR-30 | 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. | An invalid signal is any waving signal by a player of Team B that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal (Rule 6-5-3). |
| 2-11-1 FR-31 | ... The status of the ball is a fumble. | |
| 2-11-2 FR-31 | ... Muffing the ball does not change its status. | |

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| 2-11-3 FR-31 | ... When in question, the ball is accidentally touched rather than batted. Batting the ball does not change its status. | |
| 2-17-1-c FR-34 | 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. | The neutral zone exists until there is a change of team possession or until the ball is declared dead. |
| 2-19-2-a FR-35 | 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. | A forward pass is determined by the point where the ball first strikes the ground, a player, an official or anything beyond the spot of the pass. |
| 2-22-1-a FR-36 | A shift is a simultaneous change of position or stance by two or more offensive players ... | A shift is a simultaneous change of position by two or more offensive players ... |
| 2-22-1-b FR-36 | The shift ends when all players have been motionless for one full second. | |
| 2-22-1-c FR-36 | The shift continues if one or more players are in motion before the end of the one second interval. | |
| 2-23-1-i (old) | [Deleted] | The position of the ball at the snap (Rule 9-1-2-e) refers to an imaginary line through the ball parallel to the sidelines from end line to end line (A.R. 9-1-2-III-IX). |
| 2-25-8-h FR-38 | Where player possession is gained under provisions of the "momentum rule" (Rule 8-5-1-a Exceptions). | |
| 2-25-11 Case 3 FR-38 | When Rule 6-5-1-b is in effect, the post-scrimmage kick spot is the spot where the receiver first touched the kick. | |
| 2-27-4-a-b-c FR-39 | [Definition of Lineman rewritten. See rule book for complete text.] | |
| 2-27-4-d FR-39 | Definition of Back rewritten. See rule book for complete text.] | |
| 2-27-5 FR-39 | The passer is the player who throws a forward pass. | The passer is the player who throws a legal forward pass. |
| 2-27-14 FR-40 | [Definition of Defenseless Player added. See rule book for complete text.] | |
| 2-34-1-b FR-42 | The tackle box disintegrates when the ball leaves it. | |
| 3-1-3-g-1 FR-44 | ... (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). | ... (Exceptions: Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, dead-ball fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced on the succeeding play). |
| 3-2-3-a-1 FR-46 | A penalty is accepted for a live-ball foul(s) (Exception: Rule 10-2-5-a). 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 penalty is accepted for a live-ball foul(s) not treated as a dead-ball foul (Exception: Rule 10-2-5-a). The period is not extended if the statement of the penalty includes loss of down ... |
| 3-2-4-c-4 FR-46 | 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. | 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. |
| 3-3-2-e-10 (old) | [deleted] | The ball carrier's helmet comes completely off. |
| 3-3-5-a-3 FR-50 | Officials and coaches shall give special attention to players who exhibit signs of a concussion. (See Appendix C). | |
| 3-3-5-e FR-50 | Following a timeout for an injured player of the defensive team, the play clock shall be set at 40 seconds. | After a timeout for an injured Team B player, the play clock shall be set at 40 seconds. |

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| 3-4-2-b-8 FR-52 | Action clearly designed to delay the officials from making the ball ready for play (A.R. 3-4-2-II). | |
| 3-5-3 FR-54 | [Breaking the huddle with more than 11 players moved to new 3-5-3. See rule book for complete text.] | |
| 6-3-11 FR-65 | 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). This is a special case of illegal touching: Team B's privilege for this violation is not canceled by an accepted penalty. It is canceled by offsetting fouls (Rule 6-3-2-b). The spot of the violation is Team B's 20-yard line, which is the postscrimmage kick spot for fouls by Team B (Rule 2-25-11). The B-20 may also be a penalty enforcement spot for fouls by Team A during the kick play (Rules 6-3-13 and 10-2-4) (A.R. 6-3-11-I-III and A.R. 2-12-2-I). | 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, which may be a penalty enforcement spot for fouls by Team A during the kick play (Rules 6-3-13 and 10-2-4) (Exception: Rule 8-4-2-b) (A.R. 6-3-11-I-III and A.R. 2-11-2-I). |
| 6-5-3 (old) | [Definition of invalid signals moved to 2-8-3.] | |
| 7-1-2 through 7-1-4 FR-68-70 | [Major rewrite. See rule book for complete text.] | |
| 7-3-2-h Exp FR-73 | ... This applies only to the player who receives the snap. | |
| 7-3-3-c (old) | [Deleted. Player in position to receive hand-to-hand snap now defined as a back in Rule 2-27-4-d-2.] | [Eligibility to touch legal forward pass:] A player wearing a number other than 50 through 79 in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs. |
| 8-3-4 Exp FR-79 | Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, dead-ball personal fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced ... | Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, dead-ball fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced ... |
| 9-1-2 through 9-1-16 FR-83-87 | [Major rewrite. See rule book for complete text.] | |
| 9-2-3 Pen FR-89 | The referee may take any action he considers 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]. | The referee may take any action he considers equitable, including assessing a penalty, awarding a score, or suspending or forfeiting the game. |
| 9-3-4-b FR-92 | Defensive players may not use hands and arms to tackle, hold or otherwise illegally obstruct an opponent other than a runner. | Defensive players may not use hands and arms to tackle, hold or otherwise illegally obstruct an opponent other than a ball carrier. |
| 9-3-4-g FR-92 | A defensive player may not continuously contact an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (Exception: Against the runner). | A defensive player may not continuously contact an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (Exception: Against the ball carrier). |
| 10-1-3 FR-96 | [Deleted] | [Exception: When a foul(s) occurs for unsportsmanlike conduct (Rule 9-2), the penalty(ies) is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for any other foul] (A.R. 10-1-3-I) |

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| 10-1-4 Exp 3 FR-96 | [Deleted] | When a live-ball foul is administered as a dead-ball foul, it does not offset any other foul, and any penalties are enforced in order of occurrence. |
| 10-2-3-e FR-98 | Team B will next put the ball in play. | Team A is not in legal possession of the ball when it is declared dead. |
| 12-3-1-a FR-101 | A potential touchdown or safety. [Exception: Safety by penalty for fouls that are not specifically reviewable.] | a. Live ball breaking the plane of a goal line while in a ball carrier's possession. b. Live ball ruled dead in possession of a ball carrier when in the immediate continuing action the ball breaks the plane of the opponent's goal line. |
| Appendix C FR-116 | [Concussions – new appendix.] | |
| Appendix D FR-118 | [Field Diagrams – moved from front of rule book.] | |
| Appendix E FR-122 | [Equipment: Additional Details – moved from Rule 1.] | |

Part II: Interpretations

| Approved Ruling | 2011-12 | 2009-10 |
|------------------------|---|----------------|
| Introduction FI-1 | <p>In this edition of the rules book, a significant number of approved rulings that have become somewhat dated or are unnecessary have been removed. Furthermore, the reorganization of Rules 7 and 9 required different labeling and numbering of several existing approved rulings.</p> <p>Any approved rulings that have been altered significantly are shaded for ease of reference. All new approved rulings are listed in the front of this section and shaded.</p> | |