

NCAA Football Rules Committee

2006 Rules Changes – Approved by Playing Rules Oversight Panel

Rule 1-4-5-s, Eye Shields

Change: In the illegal equipment rules, only eye shields that are completely clear will be allowed.

Rationale: In reports from the NCAA's Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport and the National Athletic Trainers Association, both groups supported eliminating this allowance. Both groups noted that there are alternatives to the helmet shields if an eye condition warrants protection (contact lenses, sport goggles, etc.). Coaches in the NCAA rules survey also overwhelmingly supported the change.

Rule 2-15-4-c, Kicking Tee

Change: A tee is a device that elevates the ball for kicking purposes. It may not elevate the ball's lowest point more than one inch above the ground (A.R. 2-15-4-1).

Rationale: The change from a two-inch tee to a one-inch tee could lessen the number of touchbacks.

Rule 3-2-1-b, Halftime

Change: The intermission between halves, which begins when the field is clear of all players and coaches, shall be 20 minutes. The home team administration may lengthen or shorten the 20 minutes by previous agreement of the visiting team administration.

Rationale: This is an attempt to shorten the length of time it takes to play the game.

Rule 3-2-5, When Clock Starts

Change: When the ball is free-kicked, the game clock will be started and subsequently stopped when the ball is dead by rule.

Rationale: By starting the clock when the foot touches the ball on kicks, the length of time to play the game will be less.

Rule 3-2-5-e, When Clock Starts

Change: When Team B is awarded a first down, the clock will be stopped and will start on the ready for play signal.

Rationale: By starting the clock, the committee estimates it will shorten the game by about five minutes, according to studies by several Division I-A conferences.

Rule 3-3-3-f-4, Referee's Discretionary Timeout

Change: To delete the rule relating to excessive crowd noise.

Rationale: This rule is rarely used in the game currently, as most teams use hand signals to communicate. Additionally, this rule is largely unenforceable.

Rule 7-1-3-b, Procedural fouls

Change: “PENALTY– For live ball fouls occurring when the snap starts during scrimmage kick plays: Five yards from the previous spot or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (Field goal plays exempted).”

Rationale: The receiving team will have the option of accepting the penalty after the return or forcing the kicking team to kick again five yards from the original line of scrimmage. This could eliminate some unnecessary re-kicks.

Rule 8-3-2, Opportunity to score

Change: To alter the rule to read: The ball shall be put in play by the team that scored a six-point touchdown. If a touchdown is scored during a down in which time in the fourth period expires, the try shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game.

Rationale: This is mainly an editorial change, but this makes it clear that a team scoring with no time left is not required to attempt an extra point.

NEW Rule 12, Instant Replay

Change: To add the following procedure to the rules book, as an optional or permissive rule.

Rationale: After successful experimentation in the past two football seasons, all Division I-A conferences have requested a uniform system of replay to be included in the rules book. As this is permissive, not mandated, the rule would allow for growth without forcing all institutions and conferences to use video review. The committee notes that overall game times increased by two minutes in Division I-A, with several conferences that used replay reporting shorter game times.

Section 1. Definition

Definition

Article 1. Instant Reply is a system utilizing electronic means to review and assist game officials with certain on-field decisions as listed in Section 3.

Section 2. Eligibility for Instant Replay

Participation

Article 1. a. Any member institution may use instant replay. This rule is permissive, not a requirement. If instant replay is used, it must be used in full compliance with this rule.

b. For any non-conference game, if the home team is using instant replay, the visiting team does not have the option of declining its use for that game. If the home team is not using instant replay, the visiting team does not have the option of requesting that it be used in that game.

Section 3. Reviewable Plays

Side Line, Goal Line, End Line

Article 1. Reviewable plays governed by a sideline, goal line or an end line include:

- a. Scoring plays, including a runner in possession of a live ball breaking the plane of a goal line.
- b. A pass ruled complete, incomplete or intercepted at a side line, goal line or an end line.
- c. A runner or pass receiver ruled in or out of bounds.
- d. Recovery of a loose ball in or out of bounds in the field of play or an end zone.

Passes

Article 2. Reviewable plays involving passes include:

- a. A pass ruled complete, incomplete or intercepted anywhere in the field of play or an end zone.
- b. A legal forward pass touched by an ineligible receiver.
- c. A legal forward pass touched by a defensive player.
- d. A fumble ruled on the part of a potential passer. (Note: If the on-field ruling is forward pass and the pass is incomplete, the play is not reviewable).
- e. A forward pass or forward handing ruled when a runner is beyond the line of scrimmage.
- f. A forward pass or forward handing ruled after a change of possession.
- g. A pass ruled forward or backward when thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. (Exception: If the pass is ruled forward and is incomplete, the play is not reviewable).

Miscellaneous

Article 3. Miscellaneous reviewable plays include:.

- a. A runner judged to have been not down by rule. (Note: If a runner is ruled down, the play is not reviewable).
- b. A runner's forward progress with respect to a first down.
- c. Touching of any type kick by any player.
- d. The number of players participating by either team during a live ball.
- e. A scrimmage kicker beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is kicked.
- f. Clock adjustment when a ruling on the field is reversed.

- g. A fumble recovery by a Team A player during fourth down or a try and before any change of possession.

Plays Not Reviewable

Article 4. No other plays or officiating decisions are reviewable.

Section 4. Instant Replay Personnel, Equipment and Location

Personnel

Article 1. Instant replay personnel shall consist of the number of persons needed to operate the replay equipment within the necessary time constraints. A minimum of three persons shall be utilized to insure that all plays are reviewed in an efficient and a timely manner. Such persons are normally referred to as replay official, communicator and technician. Additional persons may be used as needed.

Equipment

Article 2. The type of equipment used to carry out necessary instant replay duties shall be determined by each conference or member institution utilizing instant replay.

Location

Article 3. a. All equipment used in making a decision during the replay process and the personnel using that equipment shall be located in a separate, secure location in the press box. This room shall not be available or accessible to any person not directly involved in instant replay.

b. Additional telephonic equipment needed to allow instant replay personnel to communicate with the game referee when a game has been stopped for a play review shall be located on a side line near the field of play and preferably outside a team area. Such equipment shall provide the game referee and the replay official a secure and private means of communication.

Section 5. Initiating the Replay Process

Game Stop

Article 1. There are two methods to stop a game to review a ruling on the field.

- a. The replay official and the crew shall review every play of a game. The replay official may stop a game at any time before the ball is next put in play whenever:
 1. There is reasonable evidence to believe an error was made in the initial on-field ruling.
 2. The play is reviewable.
 3. Any reversal of an on-field ruling, which would result from indisputable video evidence, would have a direct, competitive impact on the game.

- b. The head coach of either team may request that the game be stopped and a play be reviewed by challenging the on-field ruling one time during a game.
 - 1. A coach initiates this challenge by taking a team time out before the ball is next put in play and informing the referee that the coach is challenging the ruling of the previous play.
 - 2. After a review has been completed, if the on-field ruling is reversed, that team's time out will not be charged.
 - 3. After a review has been completed and the on-field ruling is not reversed, the charged team time out counts as one of the three permitted that team for that half.
 - 4. A head coach may not challenge a ruling in which the game was stopped and a decision has already been made by the replay official.
 - 5. If a head coach requests a team time out to challenge an on-field ruling and the play being challenged is not reviewable, the time out shall count as one of the three permitted the team during that half of the game.
 - 6. A head coach may not challenge an on-field ruling if all the team's timeouts have been used for that half. If all team timeouts have been used and a head coach signals for, and is granted, a time out, a delay penalty will be assessed.
 - 7. Each head coach shall be permitted one challenge per game.

When to Stop a Game

Article 2. a. A game may be stopped, either by the instant replay official or by a head coach's challenge at any time before the ball is next put in play.

- b. No game official may request that a game be stopped and a play be reviewed.

Section 6. Reviewing an On-field Ruling

Procedures

Article 1. a. When a game is to be stopped either by the replay official or by a head coach's challenge, the designated officials on the field will be notified by a buzzer system or other appropriate means.

- b. The referee shall announce that the ruling on the field is being reviewed. If the game has been stopped due to a head coach's challenge, the referee will so indicate in the announcement.
- c. All reviews shall be based upon video evidence provided by and coming directly from the televised production of the game. If there is no television available, all video pictures shall come from the in-stadium video board production.

- 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:
“After review, the ruling on the field is confirmed.”
 2. If there is no indisputable (conclusive) evidence to reverse the on-field ruling:
“After review, there is no conclusive video evidence to change the ruling on the field. Therefore, the ruling stands.”
 3. If the on-field ruling is reversed:
“After review, there is indisputable (conclusive) video evidence that . . . [followed by a brief description of the video evidence]. Therefore, . . . [followed by a brief description of what the reversal means].”
- e. If a ruling is reversed, the replay official shall supply the referee with all pertinent data as needed (next down, distance, yard line, position of the ball, clock status/adjustment) in order to resume play under the correct game conditions.

Time Restrictions

Article 2. a. Although each head coach is limited to one challenge per game, there is no restriction on the number of times the replay official may stop a game to review an on-field ruling.

- b. If the game is stopped to review a play, there is no time limit for the review process.

Section 7. Reversing an On-Field Ruling

Criterion for Reversal

Article 1. In order to reverse an on-field ruling, the replay official must see indisputable video evidence through one or more video replays provided to the monitor.