



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

MEMORANDUM

March 11, 2005

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TO: NCAA Football Conference Commissioners, Coordinators of Officials and Head Football Coaches.

FROM: Charles Broyles, chair
NCAA Football Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: 2005 Rules Changes.

On February 24, the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel approved the Football Rules Committee's proposals for the 2005 season, which are included in this mailing.

It is anticipated that the 2005 NCAA Football Rules Book will be printed and available in May.

If you have any questions concerning the playing rules, please contact John Adams, secretary-rules editor, at 303/799-9221, ext. 222.

CB:TYH:nkb

Enclosure

cc: Football Rules Committee
Selected NCAA Staff

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NCAA Football Rules Committee

Editorial Changes

Rule 1-2-1-a, exception

Goal lines. Add language to exception that allows the goal line to be four or eight inches wide.

Rationale: Some multiuse fields already have an eight-inch wide goal line, and some officials believe close touchdown calls are easier with the wider line.

Rule 1-4-5-p

Towels. For clarification, change to “side of the belt.”

Rationale: Clarification.

Rule 2-2-7-c

Catch, Interception, Recovery. Propose adding “...when he first returns to the ground inbounds with any part of his body inbounds or is so held...”.

Rationale: This clarifies situations where a catch is made, but the point of contact with the field is not the foot or knee, etc.

Rule 2-31-4

Playing Surface. Add “field of play” to the end of this section.

Rationale: Clarification.

Rule 3-1-3-g-2

Overtime Fouls. Make this section read: “A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled.”

Rationale: This is consistent with other times in a football game but was never written for overtime situations.

Rule 3-1-3-g, new example 4

Overtime Fouls. Add an interpretation for a foul that occurs by the scoring team during the down.

Rationale: Added to make it clear that the score is negated in these situations.

Rule 3-5-2-e

Legal Substitutions. Penalty for e is incorrect (should be five yards from succeeding spot).

Rationale: Correcting error in previous year’s book.

Rule 5-1-1-a

When to Award Series. Add “to the offensive team in overtime” to this section.

Rationale: Including an overtime situation to a general rule.

Rule 5-1-4-b

Continuity of Downs Broken. Delete reference to Team B player: “A scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone.”

Rationale: Clarification.

Rule 7-3-2-f, examples 1 and 2

Illegal Forward Pass. Change the language from “who is five or more yards” to “outside the frame of the tackle.”

Rationale: This wording is more flexible and clearer for officials.

Rule 7-3-4

Eligibility Lost by Going Out of Bounds. Change from “no eligible offensive player” to “no eligible offensive receiver” for consistency with other areas of the book.

Rationale: Clarification and consistency.

Signals, No. 19

Official Football Signals. In No. 19, Illegal procedure was eliminated from the National Federation of State High School Associations rules book. Also, add to No. 18, “Offside Kicker.”

Rationale: The NCAA publishes officiating signals in conjunction with NFHS and this reflects a change in the high school code.

Major Changes

Rule 1-4-5-s

Eye shields. The committee did not recommend any changes to requirements, but did alter the procedure for applying for tinted eye shield exception. The committee believes this responsibility should fall to the athletic training staff and should be handled through the NCAA's health and safety department, who are best suited to make determinations on eye conditions.

Rule 2-24-1

Spearing. Delete "intentional" from this rule. (Also, see change to Rule 9-1-2-1 and n.)

Rationale: After reviewing survey data from the AFCA and officiating organizations, it appears officials are hesitant to call this foul in some cases because intent is difficult to determine. The Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport also recommended this alteration.

Rule 6-4-1-a

Interference With Opportunity. Changes this section, which is intended to protect the player retuning a kick from "touched by any player" to "muffed by any player."

Rationale: This protects the player receiving the kick in the situation where he does not cleanly catch the ball. This change allows him the opportunity to field the punt.

Rule 9-1-2-d

Clipping.

Changed all references from "legal clipping zone" to "rectangular area."

Added subsection (a) in the first exception to read: "A player in the rectangular area may not block an opponent with the force of the initial contact from behind and at or below the knee (Exception: Against the runner)."

Rationale: Clipping is extremely dangerous and must not be legal at any time. This changes the rule to allow contact from behind, but only above the knee.

Rule 9-1-2-1 and n.

Spearing.

Change to read in l: No player ~~intentionally~~ shall use his helmet...to butt or ram an opponent or attempt to punish him."

Change to read in n: "No player ~~intentionally~~ shall strike a runner with the crown or top of his helmet in an attempt to punish him."

Rationale: See rationale from Rule 2-24-1.

Rule 9-1-2-q

Leaping.

Changed “an opponent” to “any player(s).” Also, added a sentence to read: “It is not a foul if the leaping player was originally lined up within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped.”

Rationale: Clarification that a leaping player is guilty of a foul if the player lands on any other player.

Rule 9-2-1-a-1-a

Unsportsmanlike acts. Added listing of examples developed by CCA supervisors of officials and others to this section to encourage more consistent application of this rule:

“Examples of such acts include, but are not limited to:

- Imitating a slash of the throat;
- Resembling the firing of a weapon;
- Bowing at the waist;
- Punching one’s own chest excessively;
- Crossing one’s arms in front of the chest;
- Placing one’s hand by the ear as if to indicate that the player cannot hear the spectators;
- Diving into the end zone when unchallenged by an opponent;
- Entering the end zone with an unnatural stride (e.g., high stepping);
- Going significantly beyond the end line to interact with spectators;
- Standing over a prone player in a taunting manner;
- Attempting to make the ball spin as if it were a top;
- Performing a choreographed act with a teammate(s) (e.g., pretending to take a photo, falling down in unison); and
- Entering the field of play by coaches or substitutes in protest of officials’ calls.”

Additionally, the committee added language to the rule that reads: “Spontaneous celebrating with teammates on the field of play, provided it is not prolonged, taunting or intended to bring attention to the individual player, is allowed.”

Rationale: By providing a list of examples, the committee hopes to assist officials to consistently enforce this penalty. Also, the committee believes there are some situations in which celebration penalties are flagged where the celebration was spontaneous and not excessive or prolonged. This isn’t a lessening of the penalty, but a reminder that team celebrations encouragement should be allowed.

Use of Instant Replay

The committee recommended the experimental use of instant replay (this was granted to the Big Ten Conference only last season) for all institutions and conferences. The statement the committee passed is below:

“Approve the experimental use of video replay in football for the 2005 regular season, using the same criteria as was approved for the 2004 regular season. Any conference that wishes to use video replay must confirm their administrative plans (e.g., equipment) and

system for use with the rules committee by June 1, 2005. Any exceptions to the approved process must be requested to the rules committee and will be discussed on a conference call June 8, 2005. Video replay will not be allowed in post-season bowl games, as the committee feels further experimentation is needed.”

Rationale: The committee believes – based on a Big Ten presentation and feedback from officials, coaches and conferences – that instant replay is a potential enhancement to the college game. The committee decided that some experimentation is necessary and also is asking that conferences/institutions interested in using instant replay confirm plans with the committee. The Big Ten ran a pilot program prior to requesting experimental use of review and felt this was critical to the success of its program.