



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2012 PLAY INTERPRETATIONS BULLETIN NO. 1

Ball Snapped Before Ready For Play

1. After Team A has made a first down, the Umpire has placed the ball on the ground at the B-30. The Referee waves the Umpire away from the ball but before he signals the ball ready for play, snapper A55 snaps the ball.

RULING: Team A dead-ball foul for delay of game. Five-yard penalty, first and 10 at the B-35. *NOTE:* This is a foul between series in that it takes place before the ball is declared ready for the next series. Hence it is first and 10, *not* first and 15. (4-1-1, 4-1-4, 5-2-7)

Marking Ball Ready For Play

2. Late in the second or fourth quarter ball carrier A22 (a) is tackled in the field of play beyond the line to gain; (b) runs out of bounds, either beyond or short of the line to gain. In both (a) and (b) the game clock reads 2:35 when the ball is declared dead.

RULING: In both (a) and (b) the game clock is stopped, and after the ball is declared dead the 40-second clock begins its countdown. When the officials have placed the ball on the ground and moved away at the Referee's direction, the Referee declares the ball ready for play by blowing his whistle while giving the wind-the-clock signal. (3-3-2-e-1 and -3)

Kick-Catch Interference

3. B25 is standing at the B-35 in position to catch a punt. As the ball is on its downward flight A88 runs by B25 very close to his side, causing B25 to adjust his position before catching the ball. A88 does not make contact and does not penetrate the one-yard area directly in front of B25.

RULING: Foul by A88, interference with the opportunity to catch the kick. Even though B25 catches the ball, A88's action causes him to move away from his original location and thus interferes with his opportunity to make the catch. (6-4-1)

Kick-Catch Interference

4. B44 is in position to catch a punt at the B-25. While the ball is still very high in the air and well before it comes close to B44, A88 runs directly in front of B44 within a yard but is not near him when the ball arrives. B44 catches the punt and is tackled.

RULING: No foul. Although A88 penetrates the one-yard region directly in front of the receiver, this is so early in the action that there is no interference with B44's opportunity to catch the kick. (6-4-1)

Helmet Off

5. After the ball is dead, A55 blocks B33 at his waist, knocking him to the ground. As B33 hits the ground his helmet comes off.

RULING: Dead-ball foul by A55, 15-yard penalty from the succeeding spot. B33 must leave the game for the next down as his helmet came off through play and not due to a helmet foul. (3-3-9-a)

Helmet Off

6. Late in the first quarter ball carrier A22 is legally tackled, and his helmet comes off just after his back hits the ground. The game clock reads 0:00.

RULING: A22 must leave the game for the next down, which will be the initial down of the second quarter. A22's helmet came off through play and there was no helmet foul by Team B. (3-3-9-a)

Continued Participation With Helmet Off

7. During a down B55's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. B55 immediately picks up his helmet, puts it on and continues to chase the ball carrier.

RULING: Personal foul by B55 for continuing to participate after losing his helmet. The clock stops at the end of the down and B55 must leave the game for the next down. (3-3-9, 9-1-17)

Continued Participation With Helmet Off

8. As A67 blocks B77 in close-line play B77's helmet comes off; there is no foul by either player. Immediately after losing his helmet B77 (a) reaches out and tackles ball carrier A22 as he runs near him; (b) recovers a fumble at his feet.

RULING: (a) and (b) B77 must leave the game for the next down, but there is no foul for continued participation without the helmet. B77 is considered to be playing in the immediate continuing action in both cases.

Helmet Off

9. Second and seven at the B-45. Defensive end B88 is flagged for roughing passer A12 by driving his shoulder into A12's sternum well after the pass is thrown. B88 does not contact his head. A12's helmet comes off as he hits the ground. The pass is complete to eligible A44 who is tackled at the B-40.

RULING: Personal foul by B88, 15-yard penalty. First and 10 at the B-25. A12 must leave the game for the next down. The helmet coming off was not the direct result of the foul by B88. (3-3-9, 9-1-9)

Helmet Off: 10-Second Runoff

10. During the down B55's helmet comes off with no foul by an opponent. B55 continues to participate in the down. When the ball is dead the game clock is stopped with 0:35 remaining in the second quarter.

RULING: Personal foul by B55 for continuing to participate with no helmet. Team A will have the option of a 10-second runoff. Although the clock stops because of the helmet coming off and for administering the penalty, there would be no foul had the helmet not come off; hence they are part of the same act. (3-3-9, 9-1-17)

Helmet Off and Injured Defensive Player

11. During the down A22's helmet comes off (no helmet foul by the defense) and B77 goes down with an injury. Ball carrier A44 is tackled inbounds. When the clock is stopped it reads 0:58 in the fourth quarter.

RULING: The play clock is set at 40 seconds, due to the defensive injury, rather than 25 seconds due to the helmet coming off the offensive player. There is no option for a 10-second runoff because the clock stops for both the helmet off and the injury. (3-2-4: c-4 supersedes c-13)

Helmets Off Opposing Players

12. Late in the second quarter helmets come off A22 and B77 through play. No helmet fouls are involved. When the clock is stopped it reads (a) 1:35; (b) 0:40.

RULING: (a) and (b) Both players must leave the game for the next down. (a) Play clock is set to 40 seconds. (b) Play clock is set to 25 seconds; there is no 10-second runoff. (3-3-9-b)

Kickoff: Infraction of the Five-Yard Rule

13. Team A is in its formation to kick off at the A-35. Two players, A33 and A66, are positioned in a four-point stance with their feet on the A-29 and their hands on the A-31. The untouched kick hits the ground in Team B's end zone and is declared dead.

RULING: Touchback. Team A foul, illegal formation. Neither A33 nor A66 has at least one foot on the A-30. Team B has two options for accepting the penalty: Put the ball in play at the B-30, after a five-yard penalty at the spot (the B-25) where the dead ball belongs to them; or have Team A re-kick at the A-30. (6-1-2-b, 6-1-8)

Blocking Below the Waist

14. Backs A22 and A44 are both aligned to the right of the formation and are restricted with regard to blocking below the waist. A22 is very wide. A44 is behind the tight end and outside the tackle box. A22 holds his position as the quarterback starts on a sweep to the right. A22 then receives a legal handoff from the quarterback and starts on a deep reverse to the left. As the play develops A44 drifts to his left, and is behind

the snapper when A22 gets the handoff. At that location A44 blocks below the waist against an opponent. His block is directed toward the right sideline.

RULING: The block by A44 is legal because it is directed toward his adjacent sideline. Although this block is in the original area of definition for the tackle box, the tackle box has disintegrated because the ball has left it. (2-34-1, 9-1-6)

Leaping the Punt Shield

15. Team A is in punt formation with A22 deep to punt and three of his teammates several yards in front of him to serve as a shield. Defensive tackle B77 rushes and leaps directly over one of the shield players in an attempt to block the impending kick. A22 muffs the snap, tries to run and is tackled for a loss.

RULING: Legal play. There is no foul for leaping over the shield if there is no kick. (9-1-11-c)

Rogers Redding
Secretary-Rules Editor
July 25, 2012



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

HELMET COMES OFF DURING PLAY: NEW RULINGS

Please note the following changes regarding a player's helmet coming off.

Helmet Comes Off Near The End Of The Down

When a player's helmet comes off near the end of a down it is quite possible that this happens after the ball is dead. The first play on the CFO "Helmets Come Off" video shows a good example, in which the receiver who catches the ball lands on his back and then his helmet comes off, just shortly after the ball becomes dead. The intent of the rule is that this player should leave the game for the next down.

To make the statement of the rules consistent with this intent, the phrase "through play" replaces "during the down" in the applicable rules. Here is the new language, with the changes shown in italics:

Rule 3-2-4-c

"13. An offensive team player's helmet comes off *through play*...."

Rule 3-3-2-e

"16. A player's helmet comes completely off *through play*."

Rule 3-3-9

"a. If a player's helmet comes completely off *through play*, other than as a direct result of a foul by an opponent, the player must leave the game for the next down....."

Continued Participation After the Helmet Comes Off

Questions have arisen about whether a player who loses his helmet may continue to play if he quickly puts the helmet back on. An earlier interpretation would allow this; however, that interpretation is no longer in effect. The applicable rule (9-1-17) now reads (new language in italics):

9-1-17

“A player whose helmet comes completely off during a down may not continue to participate beyond the immediate action in which he is engaged, *whether or not he puts his helmet back on during the down.*”

NOTE: This requires a change in Play 12 of the “Helmet Comes Off—Play Situations,” posted March 21, 2012. That play now reads:

12. During a down B55’s helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. B55 immediately picks up his helmet, puts it on and continues to chase the ball carrier.

RULING: *Personal foul by B55* for continuing to participate after losing his helmet. The clock stops at the end of the down and B55 must leave the game for the next down.

Rogers Redding

Secretary-Rules Editor

July 6, 2012



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

ADDENDUM TO 2011-12 NCAA FOOTBALL RULES

Editor's note Since publication of the *2011 and 2012 Football Rules and Interpretations* there have been a number of editorial changes and other modifications to the rules section. This addendum comprises these changes, including the new rules adopted in 2012.

Rule 2-10

Adjacent Sideline (New article)

ARTICLE 10. a. For a player stationary or in motion at the snap, the adjacent sideline is the sideline to his outside.

b. For a player in motion who is effectively behind the snapper at the snap and it is not clear which is the sideline to his outside, the adjacent sideline is the sideline toward which he is moving.

Rule 3-2-4

c. 25-Second Clock

(New item)

13. An offensive team player's helmet comes completely off during the down. The play clock is set to 40 seconds if the helmet comes completely off a player of the defensive team.

[**Exception:** If there is an option for a 10-second subtraction in either half the play clock is set at 25 seconds for any player.]

Rule 3-3-2

e. Starts on the Referee's Signal

(New item)

16. A player's helmet comes completely off during the down.

Rule 3-3-9

Helmet Comes Off—Timeout (New Article)

ARTICLE 9.

a. If during the down a player's helmet comes completely off, other than as the direct result of a foul by an opponent, the player must leave the game for the next down. The game clock will stop at the end of the down.

b. When the helmet coming off is the only reason for stopping the clock, the following conditions apply:

1. With one minute or more remaining in either half the play clock will be set at 25 seconds if the player is on offense and at 40 seconds if the player is on defense. The game clock will start on the referee's signal.

2. If there is less than one minute in the half the opponent has the option of a 10-second subtraction. The play clock will be set at 25 seconds. If there is a 10-second subtraction the game clock will start on the referee's signal. If there is no 10-second subtraction the game clock will start on the snap. The 10-second subtraction may be avoided by the use of a team timeout, if available. There is no option for a 10-second subtraction if helmets come off opposing players.

c. If the ball carrier's helmet comes off as in paragraph *a* (above) the ball is dead (Rule 4-1-3-q). If the player is not the ball carrier the ball remains alive, but he must not continue to participate in the play beyond the immediate action in which he is engaged. Prolonged participation is a personal foul (Rule 9-1-17). By definition such a player is obviously out of the play (Rule 9-1-12-b).

d. A player who intentionally removes his helmet during the down commits a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct (Rule 9-2-1-a-1-i).

Rule 6-1-1

Change of kickoff location

Unless relocated by a penalty, the kicking team's restraining line on a kickoff shall be its **35**-yard line, and for a free kick after a safety, its 20-yard line.

Rule 6-1-2

(New paragraph)

b. After the ball has been made ready for play all players on the kicking team except the kicker must be no more than five yards behind their restraining line. A player satisfies this rule when one foot is on or beyond the line five yards behind the restraining line. If one player is more than five yards behind the restraining line and any other player kicks the ball, it is a foul.

Rule 6-1-7

(New paragraph)

b. If the result of the free kick is a touchback (Rule 8-6) for Team B, they will put the ball in play at their 25-yard line.

Rule 6-4-1

(New paragraphs)

a. It is an interference foul if, before the receiver touches the ball, a Team A player enters the area defined by the width of the receiver's shoulders and extending one yard in front of him. When in question it is a foul.

e. During a free kick a player of the receiving team in position to receive the ball has the same kick-catch and fair-catch protection whether the ball is kicked directly off the tee or is immediately driven to the ground, strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of the ball kicked directly off the tee.

f. Contact by Team A involving a targeting foul (Rule 9-1-4) or other personal foul that interferes with the receiver's opportunity to catch a kick may be ruled either as interference or as a personal foul. The 15-yard penalty is enforced at the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B or at the spot of the foul, at the option of Team B. If the foul involves an act that ordinarily would result in disqualification, the fouling player must leave the game.

Rule 8-6-2

Snap After a Touchback

ARTICLE 2. After a touchback is declared, the ball belongs to the defending team at its own 20-yard line, except when the touchback results from a free kick, in which case the ball belongs to Team B at its 25-yard line (Rule 6-1-7).

Rule 9-1-6

Blocking Below the Waist

ARTICLE 6

There shall be no blocking below the waist (other than against the ball carrier) except as allowed below. (Rule 2-3-2 and A.R. 9-1-6-I-VII)

a. *Scrimmage Downs*

1. Before a change of team possession a Team A player who is beyond the neutral zone may not block below the waist toward his own goal line. When in question, the block is directed toward his goal line.

2. Before a change of team possession the following players of Team A are **restricted** with regard to blocking below the waist:

(a) A lineman more than seven yards from the middle lineman of the offensive formation at the snap.

(b) A back aligned at the snap with the frame of his body completely outside the tackle box or completely outside the frame of the body of the second lineman from the snapper in either direction toward a sideline.

(c) A back who is in motion at the snap and during this continuous motion was outside the area in *b* (above) any time after the ball was ready for play and before the snap. Note: A back is *not* restricted if he starts from a set position inside the specified area and during that continuous motion he does not leave the area (see par. 4 below).

3. A restricted player may not block below the waist against any opponent who is inside the tackle box. Outside the tackle box a restricted player may not block below the waist in a direction away from his adjacent sideline. He may legally block below the waist along the north-south line (Rule 2-12-9) or toward his adjacent sideline, but not toward his own goal line when he is beyond the neutral zone (see *a-1* above).

4. All other players of Team A are **unrestricted** and may legally block below the waist, other than in *a-1* above. In particular, a player is unrestricted if he is in motion at the snap and is never outside the area in paragraph 2-*b* after the ball is ready for play and before the snap.

5. Before a change of team possession players of Team B may block below the waist only within the area defined by lines parallel to the goal line five yards beyond and behind the neutral zone extended to the sidelines. Blocking below the waist by players of Team B outside this zone is illegal.

6. Players of Team B may not block below the waist against an opponent who is in position to receive a backward pass.

7. Players of Team B may not block below the waist against an eligible Team A pass receiver beyond the neutral zone unless attempting to get to the ball or ball carrier. This prohibition ends when a legal forward pass is no longer possible by rule.

b. Kicks

During a down in which there is a free kick or scrimmage kick, blocking below the waist by any player is illegal except against a ball carrier.

c. Change of possession

After any change of team possession, blocking below the waist by any player is illegal except against a ball carrier.

Rule 9-1-11

Leverage, Leaping and Landing

ARTICLE 11

(New Paragraph)

c. No defensive player who is inside the tackle box may try to block a punt by leaving his feet in an attempt to leap directly over an opponent.

1. It is not a foul if the player tries to block the punt by jumping straight up without attempting to leap over the opponent.
2. It is not a foul if a player attempts to leap through or over the gap between players.

Rule 9-1-17 (New Article)

Continued Participation Without Helmet

ARTICLE 17.

A player whose helmet comes completely off during a down may not continue to participate in the play beyond the immediate action in which he is engaged.

Rule 9-2-1

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

(New item)

- (i) Intentionally removing the helmet while the ball is alive.

***Rogers Redding, Secretary-Rules Editor, NCAA Football Rules Committee
May 2012***



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

CLARIFICATIONS: BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

Please note the following modifications to the new rules for blocking below the waist:

1. Restrictions on a back in motion

A back who starts in motion from outside the specified area and then re-sets inside the area is unrestricted if he subsequently goes in motion and does not leave the area. This interpretation is clarified below by changes to Rule 9-1-6-a-2-c.

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

Original language

c. A back who is in motion at the snap and was outside the area in *b* (above) any time after the ball was ready for play and before the snap.

New language

c. A back who is in motion at the snap and **during this continuous motion** was outside the area in *b* (above) any time after the ball was ready for play and before the snap. **NOTE: A back is not restricted if he starts from a set position inside the area and during that continuous motion does not leave the area.**

This also leads to a change in #4 in the “Additional Play Situations: Blocking Below the Waist,” dated April 3, 2012. Play number 4 now reads:

4. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. Back A22 initially sets up outside the tackle box to the left after the ball has been made ready for play. He then moves inside the tackle box, stops and resets behind the left tackle. He then goes in motion to his right, and at the snap he is directly behind the left guard. **RULING:** A22 re-

sets inside the tackle box after initially being outside the tackle box. Because he remains inside the tackle box after starting his new motion, he is unrestricted.

2. Blocking by a restricted player

Rule 9-1-6-a-3 (first sentence) reads in the original language:

A restricted player may not block below the waist against any opponent who is inside the area in paragraph 2-b.

This statement is somewhat ambiguous in that the area of restriction may possibly change depending on the formation. The intent of the rule is that a restricted player should not be able to block low inside the tackle box. While the difference between the two is small in practice, specifying the tackle box will make the rule easier to coach and to officiate.

Rule 9-1-6-a-3 now reads:

A restricted player may not block below the waist against any opponent who is inside the tackle box.

Rogers Redding
Secretary-Rules Editor
April 18, 2012



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

ADDITIONAL PLAY SITUATIONS BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

1. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. As the play develops guard A66 blocks below the waist against linebacker B55 at the A-37 yard line. The block is directed generally toward a sideline and at a slight angle back toward Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Illegal block. While A66 is unrestricted for blocking below the waist, no player of Team A may block toward his own goal line when beyond the neutral zone. Fifteen yards at the spot of the foul. (9-1-6-a-1)
2. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. A88 is lined up at the left end position at the snap. As the play develops he blocks below the waist against an opponent at the A-37. This block is directed toward the sideline to Team A's right. At the snap A88 is (a) five yards from the snapper; (b) more than seven yards from the snapper. **RULING:** (a) Legal block. A88 is unrestricted with regard to blocking below the waist. (b) Illegal block. A88 is restricted and thus may block below the waist only north-south or toward his adjacent sideline. This block is toward the non-adjacent sideline. (9-1-6-a-2-a)
3. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. Team A is in a tight balanced-line formation. Back A22 is stationary at the snap directly behind the left tight end—that is, completely outside the left tackle. **RULING:** A22 is restricted with regard to blocking below the waist. He may not block below the waist in any direction inside the area defined in the rule, and outside this area he may block below the waist only north-south or toward his left (adjacent) sideline. (9-1-6-a-2-b)
4. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. Back A22 initially sets up outside the tackle box to the left after the ball has been made ready for play. He then moves inside the tackle box, stops and resets behind the left tackle. He goes in motion to his right, and at the snap he is directly behind the left guard. **RULING:** Although A22

started his motion inside the tackle box and remained within the tackle box before the snap, he was outside the tackle box after the ball was made ready for play; thus A22 is restricted with regard to blocking below the waist. He may not block below the waist in any direction inside the area defined in the rule, and outside this area he may block below the waist only north-south or toward his left (adjacent) sideline. (9-1-6-a-2-c)

5. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. Back A22 initially sets up directly behind the left guard. He goes in motion to his right and at the snap he is directly behind the right guard. **RULING:** A22 is unrestricted regarding blocking below the waist; although he is in motion at the snap he has not been outside the defined area any time after the ball became ready for play. (9-1-6-a-4)

6. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. Linebacker B55 blocks below the waist against guard A68 at (a) the A-37; (b) the A-41; (c) the A-33; (d) the A-29. **RULING:** B55 may legally block below the waist inside the area between the A-40 and the A-30—i.e., five yards on either side of the line of scrimmage. (a) and (c) legal; (b) and (d) illegal. (9-1-6-a-5)

7. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. QB A12 rolls to his left, reverses field, and runs to his right. Back A44 is at the A-33 in position to receive a backward pass from A12 when the defensive end B99 blocks A44 at the thigh. **RULING:** Illegal block below the waist by B99. Although B99 is within the area where players of Team B may legally block below the waist, they may not block low on a player in position to receive a backward pass. (9-1-6-a-6)

8. Second and 5 at the A-35. The ball is at the left hash mark. Tight end A88 runs a route across the middle as Team A executes a draw play to the fullback A47. Linebacker B54 blocks below the waist against A88 at the A-40. When this block takes place ball carrier A47 is (a) at the A-33; (b) at the A-37. **RULING:** Team B may not block below the waist against an eligible receiver beyond the neutral zone as long as a legal forward pass is possible. (a) Illegal block. (b) Legal block since it is within the five-yard belt; the ball is beyond the neutral zone and thus a legal forward pass is not possible by rule. (9-1-6-a-7)

9. Team A punts on fourth down at the A-25. Back A40 is positioned as a personal protector about six yards in front of the punter. As defensive end B82 rushes to try to block the kick A40 blocks him below the waist at the A-15. **RULING:** Illegal block. Neither team may block below the waist during a kicking down. The penalty may be enforced either at the previous spot with a repeat of fourth down or at the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B. (9-1-6-b)

10. Second and 5 at the A-35. B44 intercepts a pass at the B-40 and on the return teammate B21 blocks below the waist at the B-45. This block is directed along the

north-south line. B44 is tackled at the A-45. **RULING:** Foul by B21. Following a change of possession no player is allowed to block below the waist in any direction anywhere on the field. 15 yards from the spot of the foul. First and 10 for Team B at the B-30. (9-1-6-c)

Rogers Redding
Secretary-Rules Editor
April 3, 2012



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2012: RULES CHANGES—PLAY SITUATIONS

KICK-CATCH INTERFERENCE

1. Punt receiver B44 is at the B-30 in position to catch a punt. He does not signal for a fair catch. Downfield to cover the kick, A88 times his approach so that he and the ball arrive at approximately the same time. Before B44 touches the kick, A88 is directly in front and within one yard of B44. A88 (a) makes contact; (b) does not make contact with B44. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Foul for interference with B44's opportunity to catch the kick. A88 has violated the new rule that prohibits him from being within one yard directly in front of B44 before B44 touches the ball. 15 yards from the spot of the foul, first and 10 for Team B at the B-45.
2. Punt receiver B44 is at the B-30 in position to catch a punt. He does not signal for a fair catch. Downfield to cover the kick, A88 passes close to the side of B44 so that he is within one yard and even with but not directly in front of B44 before he touches the ball. B44 does not have to adjust his position and catches the ball. **RULING:** No foul. A88 does not get in front of B44 and thus is not inside the defined one-yard area before B44 touches the ball. The ball remains alive until B44 is tackled or the ball otherwise becomes dead.
3. Punt receiver B44 is at the B-30 in position to catch a punt. He does not signal for a fair catch. Downfield to cover the kick, A88 passes close to the side of B44 so that he is within one yard and even with but not directly in front of B44 before he touches the ball. B44 must move to one side to get to the ball which he catches or muffs. **RULING:** Foul for kick-catch interference. A88 has not violated the new rule; but because his presence near B44 causes B44 to adjust his position, A88 has interfered with the opportunity under the rule that has been in place for many years. 15 yards from the spot of the foul, first and 10 for Team B at the B-45.

4. Punt receiver B44 is at the B-30 in position to catch a punt. He does not signal for a fair catch. Downfield to cover the kick, A88 is standing behind and within one yard of B44 before B44 touches the ball. **RULING:** No foul. A88 does not get in front of B44 and thus is not inside the defined one-yard area before B44 touches the ball. The ball remains alive until B44 is tackled or the ball otherwise becomes dead.

5. Punt receiver B44 is at the B-30 in position to catch a punt. He does not signal for a fair catch. Downfield to cover the kick, A88 is within one yard and directly in front of B44 before the ball arrives, but A88 does not make contact. B44 muffs the kick and A22 recovers at the B-25. **RULING:** Foul for interference with B44's opportunity to catch the kick. A88 has violated the new rule that prohibits him from being within one yard directly in front of B44 before B44 touches the ball. 15 yards from the spot of the foul, first and 10 for Team B at the B-45.

6. Punt receiver B44 is at the B-30 in position to catch a punt. He does not signal for a fair catch. Downfield to cover the kick, A88 launches and targets B44 at the neck with his forearm just slightly before B44 touches the kick. Receiving team player B33 recovers the ball and returns it to the 50-yard line. **RULING:** Foul by A88 for interference with the opportunity to catch the kick. In addition, because of the nature of the contact A88 has committed a foul for targeting a defenseless player under Rule 9-1-4. The 15-yard targeting penalty is enforced at the succeeding spot. First and 10 for Team B at the A-35. If the officials deem that A88's foul is flagrant he shall be disqualified.

LEAPING OVER THE SHIELD ON PUNTS

7. Team A is in punt formation at the A-25. Kicking team players A34, A45, and A15 form a shield a few yards in front of the punter. Defensive tackle B77 rushes forward, and in an attempt to block the kick he leaves his feet to try and jump directly over A15. **RULING:** Personal foul for attempting to leap over the shield. 15-yard penalty, previous spot, plus an automatic first down for Team A.

8. Team A is in punt formation at the A-25. Kicking team players A34, A45, and A15 form a shield a few yards in front of the punter. Defensive tackle B77 rushes forward, and in an attempt to block the kick he leaves his feet. His leap takes him between A15 and A45. **RULING:** No foul. The action by B77 does not take him directly over any of the shield players and thus it is legal.

9. Team A is in punt formation at the A-25. Kicking team players A34, A45, and A15 form a shield a few yards in front of the punter. Defensive tackle B77 rushes forward and in an attempt to block the kick he leaves his feet. His action takes him straight into the air but he does not attempt to leap over any member of the shield. **RULING:** No

foul. The action by B77 does not take him directly over any of the shield players and thus it is legal.

10. Team A is in punt formation at the A-25. Kicking team players A34, A45, and A15 form a shield a few yards in front of the punter. Defensive end B89 circles wide, and A15 moves out to keep himself between B89 and the punter. B89 is outside the tackle box when he leaves his feet to try to block the punt by leaping over A15. **RULING:** Legal play, since B89 is outside the tackle box.

Rogers Redding
Secretary-Rules Editor
March 22, 2012



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2012: RULES CHANGES—PLAY SITUATIONS

HELMET COMES OFF DURING PLAY

1. During a down ball carrier A22 is being tackled by B44. As he drives for more yardage A22's helmet comes completely off without a helmet foul by Team B. **RULING:** The ball is immediately dead and the game clock is stopped. A22 must leave the game for the next down. The play clock is set at 25 seconds. Both the game clock and the play clock start on the referee's signal.
2. During a down the helmet of A66 (not the ball carrier) comes off without a helmet foul by Team B. The ball remains alive until the ball carrier is tackled. **RULING:** The clock is stopped when the ball is dead and A66 must leave the game for the next down. The play clock is set at 25 seconds. Both the game clock and the play clock start on the referee's signal.
3. During a down the helmet of B79 comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. The ball remains alive until the ball carrier is tackled. **RULING:** The clock is stopped when the ball is dead and B79 must leave the game for the next down. The play clock is set at 40 seconds. Both the game clock and the play clock start on the referee's signal.
4. During a down the helmet of B79 comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. The ball remains alive until the ball carrier is tackled. At the end of the down the game clock shows 0:55 in the second or fourth quarter. **RULING:** The clock is stopped when the ball is dead and B79 must leave the game for the next down. The play clock is set at 25 seconds. Team A has the option of a 10-second runoff. Both the game clock and the play clock start on the referee's signal. **NOTE:** Team B may avoid the 10-second runoff by using an available team timeout. However, B79 must leave the game for the next down whether or not Team B uses a timeout.

5. During a down the helmet of A66 comes off without a helmet foul by Team B. The ball remains alive until the ball carrier is tackled. At the end of the down the game clock shows 0:55 in the second or fourth quarter. **RULING:** The clock is stopped when the ball is dead and A66 must leave the game for the next down. The play clock is set at 25 seconds. Team B has the option of a 10-second runoff. Both the game clock and the play clock start on the referee's signal. **NOTE:** Team A may avoid the 10-second runoff by using an available team timeout. However, A66 must leave the game for the next down whether or not Team A uses a timeout.

6. During a down B55's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. He continues to chase the ball carrier and attempts to make the tackle. No opponent attempts to block B55.

RULING: The ball remains alive and the clock is stopped after the down ends. B55 must leave the game for the next down. Personal foul by B55 for continuing to participate in the play. 15 yards, three-and-one enforcement and automatic first down.

7. During a down the helmet of right guard A66 comes off without a helmet foul by Team B. A66 continues to participate by leading the play around right end. **RULING:** The ball remains alive and the clock is stopped after the down ends. A66 must leave the game for the next down. Personal foul by A66 for continuing to participate in the play. 15 yards, three-and-one or previous spot enforcement, as appropriate.

8. During a down tackle A79's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team B as he is in pass-protection block mode against B88. They continue this action and the pass is thrown. **RULING:** Not a foul by A79 or by B88, as this is considered the immediate action in which they were engaged when the helmet came off. A79 must leave the game for the next down.

9. During a down tackle B77's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. He stops where he is and is subsequently blocked by A55. **RULING:** Personal foul by A55 for blocking a player who by definition is out of the play. 15-yard penalty, three-and-one or previous spot enforcement, as appropriate. B77 must leave the game for the next down.

10. With less than one minute in the fourth quarter, during the down A66 deliberately takes off his helmet. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike conduct by A66. 15-yard penalty. A66 must leave the game for the next down. Team B may exercise a 10-second runoff.

11. During a down B55's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. He continues to chase the ball carrier and attempts to make the tackle. A79 blocks B55 to prevent him from reaching the ball carrier.

RULING: The ball remains alive and the clock is stopped after the down ends. Fouls by B55 for continuing to play without a helmet and by A79 for blocking a player who is out of the play. Offsetting fouls. B55 must leave the game for the next down.

12. During a down B55's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. B55 immediately picks up his helmet, puts it on and continues to chase the ball carrier. **RULING:** No foul for continuing to participate since B55 is wearing his helmet while pursuing the play. The clock stops at the end of the down and B55 must leave the game for the next down. The play clock is set at 40 seconds and both clocks start on the referee's whistle.

13. During a down B79's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. The ball remains alive until the ball carrier is tackled beyond the line to gain for a first down for Team A. At the end of the down the game clock shows 0:55 in the second or fourth quarter. **RULING:** The clock is stopped when the ball is dead and B79 must leave the game for the next down. The play clock is set at 25 seconds. There is NO OPTION for a 10-second runoff because the helmet coming off is not the only reason for the game clock to stop. Both the game clock and the play clock start on the referee's signal.

14. During a down ball carrier A22 is being tackled by B44. As he drives for more yardage A22's helmet comes completely off because B44 pulls it off by the facemask. **RULING:** The ball is immediately dead and the game clock is stopped. 15-yard penalty against Team B, three-and-one enforcement plus automatic first down. A22 does *not* have to leave the game for the next play because his helmet comes off as the direct result of a helmet foul by Team B.

15. During a down B79's helmet comes off. A66 is flagged for holding B79 a yard behind the neutral zone, but the helmet coming off is not the direct result of this foul. The ball remains alive until the ball carrier is tackled. At the end of the down the game clock shows 0:55 in the second or fourth quarter. **RULING:** Holding by A66. 10-yard penalty at the previous spot. The clock is stopped when the ball is dead and B79 must leave the game for the next down, because the helmet comes off without a helmet foul. There is NO OPTION for a 10-second runoff because the helmet coming off is not the only reason for the game clock to stop, and because the holding foul does not cause the clock to stop. Both the game clock and the play clock start on the referee's signal following the completion of the holding penalty.

Rogers Redding
Secretary-Rules Editor
March 21, 2012



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2012: RULES CHANGES—PLAY SITUATIONS

BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

1. Third and seven at the A-30. The ball is at the left hash mark. Back A22 is split outside the tackle box to his left, and B40 moves out to cover him. The handoff goes to back A44 who runs up the middle and is tackled at the A-45. As the play develops A22 blocks B40 below the waist at the A-35. The direction of his block is (a) straight ahead along the north-south line; (b) directly toward the sideline to A22's left; (c) off the north-south line at a slight forward angle toward the sideline to his right. **RULING:** Because of his position A22 is restricted in how he may legally block below the waist. His adjacent sideline is to his left. (a) Legal block, because it is forward along the north-south line. (b) Legal block, because it is toward his adjacent sideline. (c) Foul, illegal block below the waist. The block is directed toward the non-adjacent sideline. Fifteen yards at the spot of the foul.

2. Third and seven at the A-30. The ball is at the left hash mark. Back A22 is lined up inside the tackle box just behind the right tackle. Tight end A88 is on the line six yards to the left of the snapper in a balanced-line formation. The handoff goes to back A44 who runs up the middle and is tackled at the A-45. As the play develops A22 blocks B40 below the waist at the A-35 and A88 blocks B55 below the waist at the A-40. **RULING:** These blocks are legal as long as they are not toward Team A's goal line because at the snap both A22 and A88 are positioned such that they are not restricted.

3. Third and seven at the A-30. The ball is at the left hash mark. Back A22 is split outside the tackle box to his left, and B40 moves out to cover him. The handoff goes to back A44 who sweeps around the right end and is tackled at the B-45. As the play develops B40 runs to his left to follow the play and A22 chases him. At the A-45 beyond the right hash mark A22 overtakes B40 and blocks him below the waist at the side or front. The direction of this block is (a) toward the left sideline; (b) directly along the north-south line; (c) slightly off the north-south line toward the right sideline. In each

case the block is NOT directed toward Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Because of his position A22 is restricted in how he may legally block below the waist. His adjacent sideline is to his left. (a) Legal block, because it is toward A22's adjacent sideline. (b) Legal block, because it is along the north-south line. (c) Foul, illegal block below the waist. The block is directed toward the non-adjacent sideline. Fifteen yards at the spot of the foul.

4. Third and seven at the A-30. Split end A88 is on his scrimmage line wide to the right side, eight yards from the middle lineman. During a running play A88 blocks below the waist against B66, the block directed toward A88's left. This block occurs (a) at the A-39; (b) at the A-41. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Foul, illegal block below the waist. Because of his position at the snap A88 is restricted in blocking below the waist. His adjacent sideline is to his right. Since in each case the block is directed away from his adjacent sideline, it is illegal.

5. Back A37 is lined up directly behind the snapper. He starts in motion to his right and at the snap is inside the tackle box and directly behind the right guard. A37 leads the play around right end as the quarterback keeps on a sweep to the right. As the play develops A37 goes beyond the neutral zone and blocks below the waist against an opponent, the direction of the block being along the north-south line and toward Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Illegal block below the waist. Although A37's block is north-south, it is directed toward his goal line.

6. Third and seven at the A-30. Team A is in a balanced-line formation with the ball at the left hash mark. Back A22 sets up outside the tackle box to the left. As quarterback A11 under center begins to call signals A22 starts in motion to his right. At the snap A22 is five yards directly behind the left guard and serves as A11's lead blocker on a sweep to the right. At the A-31 A22 blocks below the waist against defensive end B99; the direction of the block is toward the right sideline. **RULING:** Foul, illegal block below the waist. Because A22 is in motion at the snap he is restricted in blocking below the waist, even though he is inside the tackle box. His adjacent sideline is to his left (his outside sideline at the snap) and his low block is made toward the right sideline.

7. Defensive end B89 is two yards beyond the neutral zone when he blocks below the waist against an opponent who is the lead blocker on a sweep play. **RULING:** Legal block. Had B89 executed this same block more than five yards beyond or behind the neutral zone, it would be illegal.

8. Third and seven at the A-30. Back A44 is lined up inside the tackle box behind the left tackle and goes in motion to his right. At the snap he has not left the tackle box and is directly behind the left guard. He blocks below the waist against an opponent at the A-28, the block being directed toward the sideline to the right of the formation. **RULING:** Legal play. Although the block is to A44's non-adjacent sideline it is legal because A44 is not restricted from blocking below the waist.

9. Third and seven at the A-30. Back A40 enters the game after the ball is made ready for play and sets up behind the left tackle inside the tackle box. After being set for one second, A40 goes in motion to his right. At the snap he has not left the tackle box and is directly behind the right guard. He blocks below the waist against an opponent at the A-28 (a) toward his right sideline; (b) toward his left sideline; (c) straight ahead on a north/south line. **RULING:** (a), (b), and (c). Legal blocks. While technically A40 was outside the tackle box upon entering the game after the ball became ready for play, he satisfies the spirit of the rule for being unrestricted by always remaining inside the tackle box after coming to a set position initially.

10. Third and seven at the A-30. Back A40 enters the game after the ball is made ready for play and sets up as a wingback, two yards outside the tight end to the left of the formation. After coming to a set position, as the quarterback is calling signals A40 slides into the tackle box resets behind the left tackle to help with an apparent blitz. He then blocks below the waist at the A-28 (a) toward his right sideline; (b) toward his left sideline; (c) straight ahead on a north/south line. **RULING:** (a), (b) and (c). These blocks are all legal, as A40 is unrestricted.

Rogers Redding
Secretary-Rules Editor
March 20, 2012



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2012: RULES CHANGES—PLAY SITUATIONS

FREE KICKS

Penalty Enforcement. For free-kick situations 1 through 4, unless otherwise stated enforcement of any yardage penalty against Team A may be either at the previous spot with a re-kick or at the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B.

1. After the ball is marked ready for play at the A-35, nine Team A players have one foot on or beyond the A-30. A44 and A22 are both standing with their front feet touching the A-29. A44 then kicks off. **RULING:** Live-ball foul, illegal formation.

2. After the ball is marked ready for play at the A-35, all Team A players except A44 are between the A-30 and the A-35. As A44 approaches the ball A22 runs laterally toward the sideline along the A-33. A44 then kicks off. **RULING:** Legal Play.

3. After the ball is marked ready for play at the A-35, all Team A players except A44 are between the A-30 and the A-35. As A44 approaches the ball, A22 cuts in front of him and kicks off. **RULING:** Live-ball foul, illegal formation.

4. After the ball is marked ready for play at the A-35, all Team A players except A44 are between the A-30 and the A-35. As A44 approaches the ball, A22 cuts in front of him and kicks off. B55 blocks below the waist at the B-30 (a) during the kick; (b) during the return by receiver B23. **RULING:** (a) Team A illegal formation, Team B illegal block: offsetting fouls, re-kick at the A-35. (b) Team B may elect offsetting fouls, or they may refuse offsetting fouls with the penalty for blocking below the waist administered by rule (10-1-4-Exc. 1).

5. Team A executes an onside kick at the A-35 and the ball goes high into the air. Receiver B22 is standing in position to receive the ball at the A-47. Just as B22 is about to grasp the ball A66 leaps within a yard in front of him, grabs the ball and lands on the

ground at the A-49 with the ball firmly in his control. (a) The ball is kicked directly into the air off the tee; (b) the ball is driven off the tee directly into the ground and rebounds into the air in the manner of the ball in (a); (c) it is very difficult to tell whether the ball hits the ground before going high into the air or flies into the air directly off the tee. **RULING:** (a), (b), and (c). Foul by A66, interference with the opportunity to receive the kick. 15-yard penalty at the spot of the foul, first and 10 for Team B at the A-32.

6. Team A executes an onside kick at the A-35. The ball quickly strikes the ground off the tee, hits again at the A-38, and bounds high into the air. Receiver B22 is standing in position to receive the ball at the A-47. Just as B22 is about to grasp the ball A66 leaps in front of him, grabs the ball and lands on the ground at the A-49 with the ball firmly in his control. **RULING:** Legal play. B22 does not have protection because the ball hits the ground a second time. First and 10 for Team A at the A-49.

7. Team A kicks off at its 35-yard line. The ball goes into Team B's end zone (a) where it first touches the ground; (b) and touches the ground after bouncing at the B-5; (c) where B22 catches it and takes a knee. **RULING:** (a), (b), and (c) Touchback. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-25.

8. Team A kicks off at its 35-yard line. Receiver B22 catches the kick and returns the ball to the A-3. There he fumbles the ball which rolls into the goal line pylon or through the end zone and across the end line. **RULING:** Touchback. Team A's ball, first and 10 at the A-20.

9. Team A kicks off at its 35-yard line. The ball is untouched when it rolls out of bounds at the B-25, which is a foul by Team A. Team B does not want the ball re-kicked. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-35.

Rogers Redding
Secretary-Rules Editor
March 19, 2012

2011-12 NCAA FOOTBALL RULES AND INTERPRETATIONS: 2012 CHANGES

The 2012 action of the NCAA Football Rules Committee has resulted in several changes to the current edition of the rule book. These are to take effect with the 2012 season and, pending additional changes, will be incorporated into the 2013-14 edition.

FREE KICK

Rule 6-1-1 (FR-61)

In the last sentence of Article 1, delete “30” and replace with “35.”

Rule 6-1-2 (FR-61)

In Article 2 the first sentence begins a paragraph labeled *a*.

A new paragraph *b* is added ahead of the sentence beginning “When the ball is kicked...”:

b. After the ball has been made ready for play all players on the kicking team except the kicker must be no more than five yards behind their restraining line. A player satisfies this rule when one foot is on or beyond the line five yards behind the restraining line. If one player is more than five yards behind the restraining line and any other player kicks the ball, it is a foul.

Rule 6-1-7 (FR-62)

The sentence in Article 7 becomes paragraph *a*.

A new paragraph *b* is added:

b. If the result of the play is a touchback (Rule 8-6) for Team B, they will put the ball in play at their 25-yard line.

This is accompanied in **Rule 8-6-2 (FR-81)** by inserting “**Exception:** Free Kick” following the words “20-yard line” in the first sentence and by deleting the words “on the 20-yard line” in the second sentence.

Rule 6-4-1 (FR-66)

Add new paragraph *e*:

e. During a free kick a player of the receiving team in position to receive the ball has the same kick-catch and fair-catch protection whether the ball is kicked directly off the tee or is immediately driven to the ground, strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of the ball kicked directly off the tee.

This is accompanied by an exception in paragraph *a* regarding the kick touching the ground.

BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

Rule 9-1-6 (FR-84)

ARTICLE 6. There shall be no blocking below the waist (other than against the ball carrier) except as allowed below. (Rule 2-3-2 and A.R. 9-1-6-I-VII)

a. Scrimmage Downs

1. Before a change of team possession a Team A player who is beyond the neutral zone may not block below the waist toward his own goal line. When in question, the block is directed toward his goal line.

2. Before a change of team possession the following players of Team A are **restricted** with regard to blocking below the waist:

a. A lineman more than seven yards from the middle lineman of the offensive formation at the snap.

b. A back aligned at the snap with the frame of his body completely outside the tackle box or completely outside the frame of the body of the second lineman from the snapper in either direction toward a sideline.

c. A back who is in motion at the snap and was outside the area in *b* (above) any time after the ball was ready for play and before the snap.

3. A restricted player may not block below the waist against any opponent who is inside the area in paragraph 2-*b*. Outside this area a restricted player may not block below the waist in a direction away from his adjacent sideline. He may legally block below the waist along the north-south line (Rule 2-12-9) or toward his adjacent sideline, but not toward his own goal line when he is beyond the neutral zone (see *a-1* above).

4. All other players of Team A are **unrestricted** and may legally block below the waist, other than in *a-1* above. In particular, a player is unrestricted if he is in motion at the snap and is never outside the area in paragraph 2-*b* after the ball is ready for play and before the snap.

5. Before a change of team possession players of Team B may block below the waist only within the area defined by lines parallel to the goal line five yards beyond and behind the neutral zone extended to the sidelines. Blocking below the waist by players of Team B outside this zone is illegal.

6. A Team B player may not block below the waist against an opponent who is in position to receive a backward pass.

7. Players of Team B may not block below the waist against an eligible Team A pass receiver beyond the neutral zone unless attempting to get to the ball

or ball carrier. This prohibition ends when a legal forward pass is no longer possible by rule.

b. Kicks

During a down in which there is a free kick or scrimmage kick, blocking below the waist by any player is illegal except against a ball carrier.

c. Change of possession

After any change of team possession, blocking below the waist by any player is illegal except against a ball carrier.

Rule 2-12-10 (FR-32) (New Article)

Adjacent Sideline

Article 10. a. For a player stationary or in motion at the snap, the adjacent sideline is the sideline to his outside.

b. For a player in motion who is effectively behind the snapper at the snap and it is not clear which is the sideline to his outside, the adjacent sideline is the sideline toward which he is moving.

HELMET COMES OFF DURING PLAY

Rule 3-2-4-c (FR-47)

Add new item 13:

13. An offensive team player's helmet comes completely off during the down. The play clock is set to 40 seconds if the helmet comes completely off a player of the defensive team. (**Exception:** With less than one minute remaining in either half the play clock is set at 25 seconds for any player.)

Rule 3-3-2-e (FR-48)

Add new item 16:

16. A player's helmet comes completely off during the down.

Rule 3-3-10 (FR-51) New Article

Helmet Comes Off--Timeout

ARTICLE 9.

a. If during the down a player's helmet comes completely off, other than as the direct result of a foul by an opponent, the player must leave the game for the next down. The game clock will stop at the end of the down.

b. When the helmet coming off is the only reason for stopping the clock, the following conditions apply:

1. With one minute or more remaining in either half the play clock will be set at 25 seconds if the player is on offense and at 40 seconds if the player is on defense. The game clock will start on the referee's signal.

2. If there is less than one minute in the half the opponent has the option of a 10-second subtraction. The play clock will be set at 25 seconds. If there is a 10-second subtraction the game clock will start on the referee's signal. If there is no 10-second subtraction the game clock will start on the snap. The 10-second subtraction may be avoided by the use of a team timeout, if available.

c. If the ball carrier's helmet comes off as in paragraph *a* (above) the ball is dead (Rule 4-1-3-q). If the player is not the ball carrier the ball remains alive, but he must not continue to participate in the play beyond the immediate action in which he is engaged. Prolonged participation is a personal foul (Rule 9-1-17). By definition such a player is obviously out of the play (Rule 9-1-12-b).

d. A player who intentionally removes his helmet during the down commits a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct (Rule 9-2-1-a-1-i).

**Rule 9-1-17 (FR-87) (New Article)
Continued Participation Without Helmet**

ARTICLE 17.

A player whose helmet comes completely off during a down may not continue to participate in the play beyond the immediate action in which he is engaged.

Rule 9-2-1-a-1 (FR-87)

Add new item i.

i. Intentionally removing the helmet while the ball is alive.

ATTEMPTING TO LEAP OVER THE PUNT SHIELD

Rule 9-1-11 (FR-85)

Add new paragraph *c*:

c. No defensive player who is inside the tackle box may try to block a punt by leaving his feet in an attempt to leap directly over an opponent.

1. It is not a foul if the player tries to block the punt by jumping straight up without attempting to leap over the opponent.

2. It is not a foul if a player attempts to leap through or over the gap between players.

OPPORTUNITY TO CATCH A KICK

Rule 6-4-1 (FR-66)

Add new paragraph *a* and re-label the existing paragraphs.

a. It is an interference foul if, before the receiver touches the ball, a Team A player enters the area defined by the width of the receiver's shoulders and extending one yard in front of him. When in question it is a foul.

March 1, 2012