

STATEMENT ON SPORTSMANSHIP
NCAA Football Rules Committee
February 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.